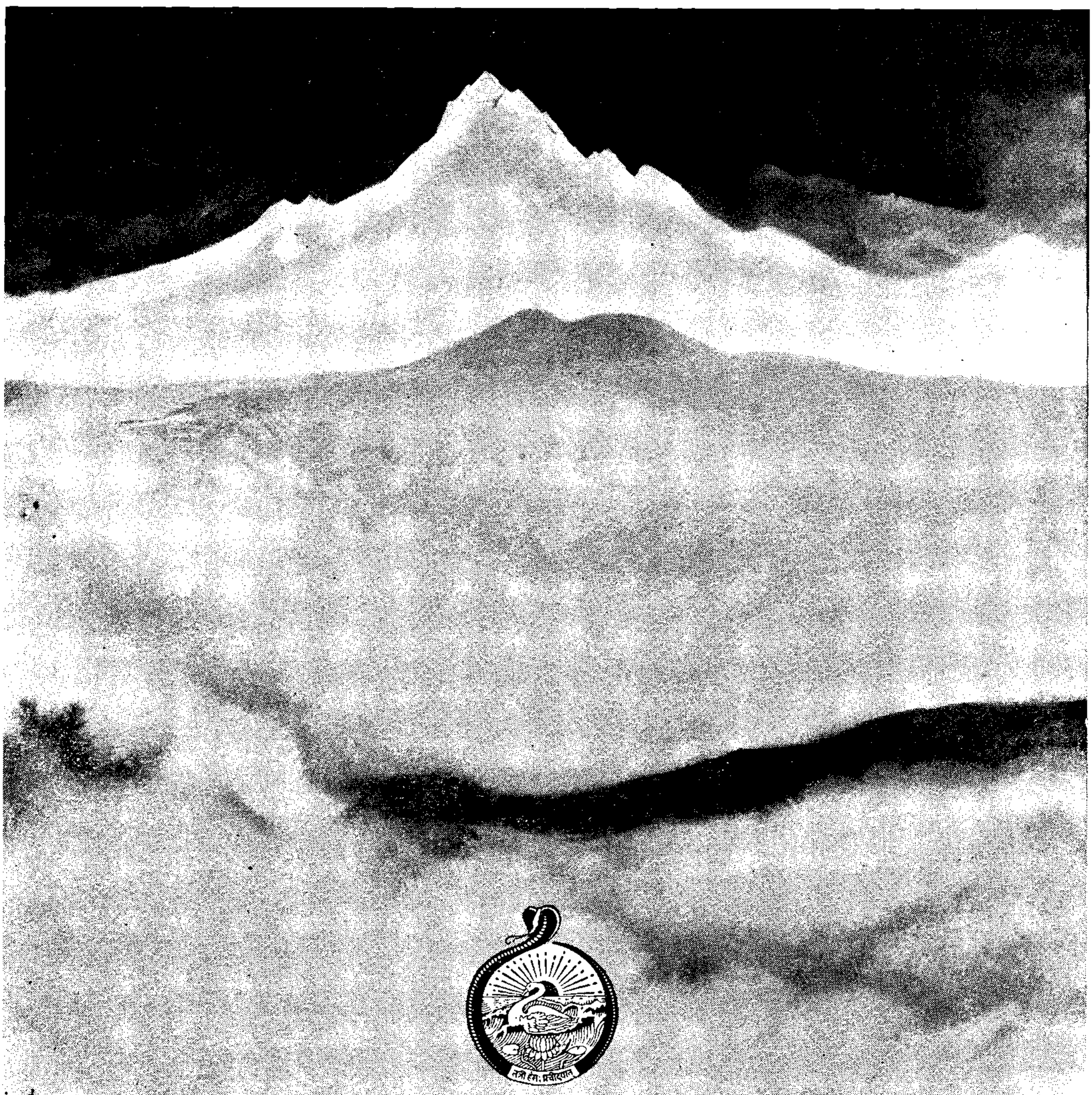

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or

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Prabuddha Bharata

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CONTENTS

Visions of Divinity 121

About this Issue 122

Kshir Bhavani and Vivekananda
—(*Editorial*) 122

Sound Brahman
—*Pravrajika Brahmaprana* 128

World Without War: Approach of the U.N. Charter
—*Dr. Anil Baran Ray* 137

Swami Vivekananda's Vision of Complete Man and Today's Political Thoughts II
—*Swami Someswarananda* 141

Reflections on the Meaning of Sri Ramakrishna For Woman II
—*Ann Myren* 147

A Reverie in the Himalayas
—*Tumken Bagra* 153

A Reader's Experience
—*N. Gopinath* 154

Brother Lawrence
—(*A Review article*) 155

News and Reports 158

Prabuddha Bharata: 90 Years ago ... 159

Practical Hints for Spiritual Life 160

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 93 APRIL 1988 No. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

VISIONS OF DIVINITY

Sri Rama and His Name

Parvati said to Shiva:

'Rama, I now understand, is no other than the indestructible Brahman (God) who is Consciousness Itself and Who, though bereft of all, yet dwells in the heart of all. Why did He take the form of a human being? Explain this to me, O Shankara'.

Shiva said:

'Listen, O sensible lady: Sri Rama is beyond the grasp of intellect, mind or speech: such is my conviction. I tell you the reason as I understand it and even as the saints and sages, the Vedas and the Puranas have stated according to their intellectual level. Whenever virtue declines and vile and haughty demons multiply and work iniquity that cannot be told, and whenever Brahmanas, cows, gods and earth itself are in trouble, the gracious Lord assumes various (transcendent) forms and relieves the distress of the virtuous.

'There is no one enlightened or deluded. Man instantly becomes what the Lord of Raghus wills him to be at a particular moment.'

Tulasidasa says:

'Devotion to the Lord of Raghus is, as it were, the rainy season and the noble devotees, says Tulasidasa, represent the paddy crop; while the two charming syllables of the name 'Rama' stand for the two months of *Shravana* and *Bhadrapada* (corresponding roughly to July and August).

'Instal the luminous gem in the shape of the divine name "Rama" on threshold of the tongue at the doorway of your mouth, if you will have light both inside and outside, O Tulasidasa.

'The Lord of Ragus conferred immortality only on faithful servants like Sabari (the celebrated Bhil woman) and the vulture (*Jatayu*), while His Name has delivered innumerable wretches; the tale of the virtues of His name is well-known in the Vedas.

'The name of Rama is a wish-yielding tree, the very home of beatitude in this age of Kali, by remembering which Tulasidasa (the poet himself) was transformed from an intoxicating drug like the hemp-plant into the holy masil.'

Ramcharitmanasa (*Balakanda*),
by Tulasidasa

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This month's EDITORIAL is on Swami Vivekananda's visit to Kshir Bhavani temple in Kashmir and the impact of the visit on his life.

The second and the concluding part of SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S VISION OF COMPLETE MAN by Swami Someswarananda, Ramakrishna Mission, Bombay, shows the ineffectuality of today's psycho-political thoughts to solve modern problems, and the need of Vivekananda-Vedanta for the same.

THE SOUND BRAHMAN is a scholarly interpretation of the Primal Sound, the Logos from the standpoint of modern scientific thought and Indian scriptures. The writer Pravrajika Brahmaprana is a member of the Sarada Convent, Santa-Barbara, California.

A WORLD WITHOUT WAR by Dr. Anil Baran Ray, Head of the Dept. of Political Science, Burdwan University, critically exposes the loopholes in some clauses in the U. N. Charter, which deal with wars between nations.

The second and the concluding part of REFLECTIONS ON THE MEANING OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA FOR WOMEN deals with Bhairavi Brahmani, the woman-teacher of Sri Ramakrishna, and the far-reaching impact of the Master's life for the spiritual enlightenment of women all over the globe. The author, Ann Myren, teaches social sciences at the College of Alameda, Alameda, California.

A REVERIE IN THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS by Tumken Bagra, advocate, Along, is a mock-serious writing on the growing influence of the Ramakrishna-movement for an all-round development of the hilly regions of Arunachal Pradesh.

AN EXPERIENCE by Sri N. Gopinath, Bangalore, is an account of an interesting incident.

BROTHER LAWRENCE, a Review-Article by Swami Abhiramananda, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, is a small but illuminating portrayal of the well-known Christian saint.

KSHIRBHAVANI AND VIVEKANANDA

(EDITORIAL)

After the dreary winter of four long months, in the warm spring of April, pilgrims have started pouring again into the sacred shrine of Kshir Bhavani in Kashmir. Every year at the end of autumn the reddening chennars cover the mother-nature of Kashmir in the ochre of a nun. Then with the approach of winter the entire valley is slowly covered with snow. The last leaves are shed, leaving the trees bare. Like the ashes of Shiva's cremation ground, the all-engulfing snow makes the seven-coloured mother-nature finally one with the all-white Shiva. All life in nature is suspended, until with the advent of spring new leaves and buds blossom forth everywhere turning the vast valley of white into a superabundance of shades and colours. Every year this silent and all-pervading rejuvenation of nature brings a feeling of a reawakening of Divine Mother in this Mother-centred vale of Indian civilization. A profound presence of such an awakened Mother-Power silently wait-

ing with grace and love for Her children, strikes any pilgrim who enters into the vast, quiet courtyard of Kshir Bhavani, the Goddess of coloured springs. Ninety years ago in the autumn of 1898, Vivekananda came here seeking the Mother of the Universe, and eventually surrendered at Her feet.

* * * *

After the austere pilgrimage to the dizzy heights of Amarnath cave, the downward journey from Pahalgam to Srinagar, along the river shaded by tall poplars and magnificent chennars, was an experience of peace and leisure. 'The river is like glass, and slight breeze meets us in our leisurely progress. It is like heaven', wrote Nivedita who accompanied her Master in this Himalayan pilgrimage. Swamiji rejoiced now at the prospect of some quiet days in Kashmir. There, in the midst of forest and flowing streams, he was now looking forward, as he wrote to someone, 'to have meditation deep and long, under the deodars, crosslegged *á la Buddha*'.[1] But the strong spiritual vibrations of Mother-worship in the valley of Kashmir, slowly turned his mind to thoughts on Mother. Already he had started worshipping as Uma, the four-year old daughter of his Muslim boatman. His attention now appeared, as his disciples saw, to shift from Shiva to Mother. He was always singing the songs of Ramprasad 'as if he would saturate his own mind with the conception of himself as a child'. Everywhere he became conscious of Mother, 'as if She were a person in the room'.[2] And this mood of seeking the Mother everywhere and for everything, was suddenly intensified by an unexpected turn of events.

At the express invitation of the Maharaja of Kashmir, Vivekananda had come to choose a beautiful plot of land under the shade of giant Chennars by the riverside, for the establishment of a Math and a Sanskrit college. The Western followers who were seeking to meditate in Swamiji's inspiring presence and direction, were already asked by him to go and live in tents on the proposed Math ground. It was auspicious, he thought, according to the Hindu tradition, that the new homestead should be blessed by woman. The camping or the 'women's Math' was started. But the dream was soon shattered. The stirring of the missionaries began, and the agenda was vetoed twice by Sir Adalbert Talbot, then acting Resident. Vivekananda was denied even the opportunity of discussing the issue with the rulers. The unexpected disappointment was a rude shock and haunted him like 'a malady of thought, which would consume a man, leaving him no time for sleep or rest and would often become as insistent as a human voice.'

At this time in August 1898, he wrote to his brother disciple Swami Brahmananda, 'My great anxiety is this, the work has somehow been started, but it should go on and prosper even when we are not here; such thoughts worry me day and night.' His prophetic dreams suddenly seemed to be breaking in disillusionment. All uproarious ovations by his countrymen for the last one year now appeared to him as temporary jubilations. The heroes by thousands of whom he had dreamt, were nowhere in sight. The few who veered round him were incapable, despite their sincerest devotion, of understanding the global and far-reaching dimensions of his thought, much less of making necessary effort to translate them into action. Some of the dearest and

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1. His Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1981) vol. 2, pp. 374-377.

2. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1967) vol. 1, pp. 92-93.

3. Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1987) vol. 5, pp. 39-45.

nearest came even to distrust and doubt his mission. Besides the handful of brothers and disciples India could offer him, until then, not a single life was ready for a total sacrifice for the sake of national regeneration. The global mission of Vedanta which he had begun by the sweat of his brow, took no root as yet. After years of terrible labour both in India and abroad, the future looked bleak. His own broken health added more gloom to the mood of disappointment. The period was for him a time of 'mental hell', of 'tortures', 'disease', 'misfortune,' and a 'load of suffering,' as he wrote afterwards.[4]

Had it been two years before, Vivekananda would have persisted and faced the bleak circumstances with his bull-dog tenacity, and probably got the idea of the Kashmir Math realized in the face of the most adamantine obstacles. But today his thought took a different turn. Vivekananda now began to dwell on 'the dark, the painful and the inscrutable' aspects of life. He was determined, as if by an irresistible passion, to reach the Mother, the One behind phenomenal Reality, through the darker avenues of frustration, pain and suffering. His 'whole cry now was "the worship of the Terrible" '. In the height of this mood, one day he had the vision of the Mother as death and destruction, the Cosmic Power 'wrenching trees by the roots' and 'sweeping all from the path'. In a frenzy of inspiration, Vivekananda struggled to capture this vision, and scribbled a few lines, which crystallized into his great poem *Kali the Mother*. The concluding lines brought the grand finale of this realization of Mother as the all-destroying and inscrutable Power behind all sufferings of life and its final annihilation:

For terror is Thy name,
Death is in Thy breath
And every shaking step
Destroys a world forever.
Thou Time, the All-Destroyer!
Come, O Mother, Come!
Who dares misery love
And hug the form of Death
Dance in destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes.

Mother had indeed come through the avenue of death, and consumed the child totally. 'It all came true, every word of it,' said Vivekananda. 'To *him* the Mother does indeed come. I have proved it. For I have hugged the form of Death!'[5] Within two days he left alone for the holy shrine of Divine Mother at Kshir Bhavani, leaving behind a word that he was not to be followed.

* * * *

In a secluded and almost cloistered corner of the lonely Sind valley, the small temple of Bhawani stands in the midst of a spring, where the colour of the water changes along with the seasons. Six magnificent chennars standing like green colossuses, cover the vast area with their cool shade. On the sun-blanched courtyard the devotees circumambulate the small spring and offer flowers, milk, and sweets to the spring in honour of the Divine Mother who is known as Maharajani (Goddess of the great dark night). An unspeakable sweetness and purity envelop the silent area surrounded by snow-capped hills, forests, and a small tributary of the Dal Lake. Water lilies blossom on the dark waters of the lake, and birds sing in forest branches all around. The 35 km long way that leads to this lovely spot, passes successively through the five areas of Vicharmarg (the lake of discrimination), Tyangal-bal (the hill of burning charcoals), Kavajbar (the fire of cremation ground) Amar-her (the immortal stair-case) and finally, Anchar nag (the Lake of purificatory rites). Tradition says that Mother

4. Ibid. p. 39.

5. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 99,

Maharajani, originally worshipped by King Ravana, later left the Demon King as he insulted the Divine Mother Sita, and settled in this cloistered valley of Kashmir. Since only Kshir or sweets are offered to Bhavani, the goddess of the temple, the place has become famous as Kshir Bhavani.[6]

* * * *

Ninety years ago when an utterly exhausted Vivekananda came here on boat along the Dal Lake to seek the Mother, the temple was only a mass of ruins, a result of Islamic Vandalism on Hindu idols and temples. At the pathetic sight of the destroyed temple, the wounded vanity of the heroic devotee who just returned after conquering half the globe, raised its head. Standing before the ruins, Vivekananda thought, 'How could the people have permitted such sacrilege without offering strenuous resistance! If I were then, I would have never allowed such things. I would have laid down my life to protect the Mother.'

At once a thundering rejoinder came to his unspoken thought. Vivekananda heard it, clear and distinct. It was the unmistakable voice of Mother, the Mother of all, 'What, even if unbelievers should enter my temples, and defile my images ? What is that to you ? Do *you* protect Me ? or do *I* protect you ?'

The last veil of patriotic ego fell off the mind of the patriot-saint. 'All my patriotism is gone! I am only a little child', he said after the experience.

For seven days, like a devout child Vivekananda daily worshipped Mother in Her vibrant presence, performing Homa, and offering Ksheer of one maund of milk, rice and almonds. He told his beads, and every morning worshipped the living presence of the Mother in the small virgin daughter of the temple priest as Uma Kumari, the Divine Virgin. He lived a life of severest austerities in order to clear the least veil of Maya that might have shaded, even temporarily, the ever-free soul like Shuka and Shiva, whom Sri Ramakrishna had brought in the body of Vivekananda for the spiritual elevation of mankind.

Slowly a fond desire crystallized in Vivekananda's mind. He wished to build a new temple over those ruins. Again came the voice of the Mother startling the brooding child, 'My child! If I wish I can have innumerable temples and magnificent monastic centres. I can even this moment raise a seven-storied golden temple on this very spot.' Realization dawned on the drooping soul. None can resist the Divine Will. Mother is the wire-puller. We are only automata. All will belongs to HER Supreme Will. SHE is Self-Willed, *Iccha-mayee*. The way to peace and fulfilment is to surrender oneself to Divine Will, to drift along Her irresistible current.

After the seven hallowed days, when Vivekananda returned to the disciples at Srinagar, he looked 'like one transfigured and inspired'. He came to them 'all radiant'. He raised his hands in benediction and blessed them with marigolds offered to Mother at Kshir Bhavani. Finally, he spoke out, 'No more. Hari Om! It is all "Mother" now! All my patriotism is gone. Everything is gone. Now it is only Mother! Mother! I have been wrong.' The Ultimate Reality which revealed Itself to Vivekananda only a month before as Shiva, the Infinite Being, transcending over death, today revealed once again as Mother, the Infinite Power, capable of creating and destroying universes, like a baby playing with fragile toys.

The visible change in Vivekananda awed everyone. All the fervent ideas of national regeneration, women's Math and others which were so long seething in his mind, were fulled to an absolute calmness. He now talked simply like a child of Mother,

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6. Dr. Chaman Lal Sapru, 'Holy Places in Kashmir' *Prabuddha Bharata* (Calcutta) 1983, p. 148.

'but his soul and his voice are those of God', wrote Nivedita during those unforgettable moments. And those who came near him felt the 'nearness of one who had seen God, and whose eyes even now are still full of the vision.' 'The mingled solemnity and exhilaration of his presence' made others approach him with an unspeakable reverence. Nivedita wrote to a dear one, 'He is *all* love now.... I cannot tell you about it. It is too great for words. My pen would have learnt to whisper'.[7] Since his return he lived mostly alone like a child on the lap of the Mother. He was hardly to be seen even by his disciples. An 'overwhelmingly ascetic impulse' now engulfed him. He shaved off his tousled hair and looked like one of those old-time monks who never knew what the world is. The 'combativeness' of the cyclonic monk was gone. 'Not an impatient word, even for the wrong-doer or the oppressor came from his lips which poured forth now words tinged with the greatness and gentleness of a soul as large as the universe, all bruised and anguished, yet all love', Nivedita wrote, 'The last words I heard him were, "Swamiji is dead and gone", and again "There is bliss in torture". He has no harsh word for anyone. In such vastness of mood Christ was crucified.'[8] The vision of Mother still lingered in his eyes. 'These images of gods are more than can be explained by solar myths and nature myths. They are visions seen by true Bhakti. They are real', he said to the disciples. Like his Master, the 'eternal child of Mother', he now sang the song of Ramprasad, 'In the busy market place of life Mother is flying kites.... out of a hundred thousand she cuts the strings of one or two.' His mind had gone back to Mother. One could feel that the tempestuous fury with all the desire to fight and conquer, was over. What remained now was a placid sea of peace and blessedness, a 'great spring of healing and knowledge to the world'. Within a few weeks he left like a child hungering for mother, to the abode of his Master at Calcutta where his brother disciples eagerly awaited him.[9]

* * * *

Only a few weeks earlier, Vivekananda made the difficult journey to Amarnath cave through the death-dealing regions of nature, and stood face to face with Shiva. Today he made a still more difficult journey through the dark regions of the soul, the internal nature, through the valleys of incertitude, fear, disappointements, doubts, pains, and sufferings, and finally stood face to face with Mother, the all-destroying Time. 'The goal of life is to manifest the divine within by controlling nature external and internal', he had said. If the America of 1894 saw the fury of a cyclonic monk, in the autumn of 1898, Kashmir saw the prophet as a fearless warrior emerging victorious after a dark night of the soul. True to his gospel of man-making, Vivekananda emerged a complete and ideal man who conquered nature, both external and internal, a man absolutely fearless, totally surrendered, totally transcended and identified with God, the Cosmic Will. Even the bondage of the ripe 'I' of Shankara and Suka, with which Ramakrishna's Mother Kali one day had enveloped the ever-free soul, was untied today by Mother Herself who now took all the responsibility of Her son. For the rest of his life Vivekananda remained transcendent, a seraphic child of Divine Mother, floating on the beatitude which passeth understanding.

This transcendence became the dominant trait for the rest of his life. After this trip, a disciple, while talking to him found an almost impenetrable abstraction of his master who seemed to be totally oblivious

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7. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, Ed., Shankari Prasad Basu (Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1981) vol. 1, pp. 24-26.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.

of what was going on around him.[10] He turned into a 'Man of God', as Nivedita saw him then, whose very presence was bringing even kings at the 'Feet of Mother'.[11] When his western disciples suggested and even urged him to take a second trip to the West, 'he had no great inclination for that', said Turiyananda. His brother disciples virtually persuaded him to take the trip, on health grounds.[12] The warrior prophet of 1892 was gone. He made no plans and accepted only what was offered by God. Yet his words were now charged with an irrevocable, prophetic power. His thoughts, backed by Cosmic Will, worked out. His very presence awakened divinity in others. His life became now a perpetual play ground of Divine Will and Power. Before leaving for the West he went to the chapel, sang to his Master, and spoke to the novitiates about sannyasa as 'the love of death', 'The sannyasin is to love death. Are we to commit suicide then ? Far from it.... What is love of death then ? We must die. That is certain ; let us die then for a good cause.... For the whole world is one ; you are rated a very insignificant part of it, and therefore it is right for you that you should serve millions of brothers rather than aggrandize this little self'.

* * * * *

Kshir Bhavani experience had brought Vivekananda a palingenesis, a rebirth. 'The old cat must die', he would often say. After the dark night of the soul, a new self, as it were, was now born with total self-surrender, universal love, and ineffable peace. Nearly after two years of this visit he wrote to Nivedita on 28 March 1900:

> Things have got to come round—the seed must die underground to come up as tree. The last two years were the underground rotting. I never had a struggle in the jaws of death, but it meant a tremendous upheaval of the whole life. One such brought me to Ramakrishna, another sent me to the U.S. This has been the greatest of all. It is gone—I am so calm that it astonishes me sometimes.

We remember the words of Saint Paul, 'So also is the resurrection of the dead.... It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power'.[13] Of this rebirth Vivekananda himself spoke in his poem 'Peace', composed long after the experience:

> It is death between two lives
> And lull between two storms
> The void whence rose creation
> And that whence it returns.

The nation maker, the champion of Hinduism and India, was now lost and reborn into a world-mover and a world-lover, a Jnani of Advaitic vision enjoying the play of Mother everywhere and yet shedding his last drop of blood to lead mankind to God. An all-engulfing Love now replaced the earlier spirit of renunciation and flight. The worries about his mission were now replaced by an 'ineffable peace.' To Mary Hale he wrote:

> I am attaining peace that passeth understanding.... My passing through the valley of death—physical, mental—last two years, has helped me in this.... Now I am going to be truly Vivekananda. Did you ever enjoy evil! Ha! Ha! you silly girl, all is good! Nonsense. Some good, some evil. I enjoy the good, and I enjoy evil. I was Judas Iscariot ; both my plan, my fun. 'So long as there are two, fear shall not leave thee....'
>
> I have no good to attain, no ideal to clench up to, no ambition to fulfil ; I, the diamond mine, am playing with pebbles, good and evil.... If the universe tumbles round my ears, what is that to me ? I am Peace that passeth understanding.

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10. *Swami Vivekananda in the West*, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 4.
11. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 55.
12. *Swami Vivekananda in the West*, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 7.
13. 1, Corinthians, 15: 35-47.

This peace was the result of total self-surrender. Vivekananda saw himself now only as an instrument of the Mighty Divine Will. To a dear one he confided this feeling, 'Mother is doing Her own work ; I do not worry much now. Moths like me die by the thousand every instant. Her work goes on all the same. Glory unto Mother! Her will be done!... We are Her automata. She is the wirepuller.'

And finally the tired, nostalgic Vivekananda spoke out in the most marvellous letter ever written by him. The last veil of 'the guide', 'the Guru', 'the teacher', 'the leader' the higher ego with which he had moved the world, was now gone for ever. It was a truant child who now cried out to return to his Mother's lap, 'Behind my work was ambition, behind my love was personality, behind my purity was fear, behind my guidance thirst for power! Now they are all vanishing and I drift. I come! Mother, I come! In Thy warm bossom, floating wheresover Thou takest me in the voiceless, in the wonderland, I come—a spectator, no more an actor.'[14]

This was the voice of the Child-Vivekananda who had one day stood face to face with his Mother of the Universe in the holy precincts of Kshir Bhavani.

14. *Letters of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1981) pp. 417-423.

SOUND BRAHMAN

PRAVRAJIKA BRAHMAPRANA

The sound of an earthquake—the ominous "crack" of the earth shifting—humbles and frightens us. Streams rippling and ocean waves breaking somehow soothe us. The incessant sounds of winds howling, a baby crying, or cars honking irritate us. Musical patterns—notes, rhythms, harmonies, and rests—stir our emotions and affect our frame of mind. The spoken word is a powerful force and we are slaves to its impact. An intonation and pitch of a single word can altogether change its meaning and our reactions to it. Some words literally grate on our nerves ; others may elevate our consciousness.

Scientists have discovered that sound signals can influence appetite and digestion, alter blood pressure, circulation, and heartbeat. Furthermore, patterned sounds can produce insomnia or deep sleep, and special auditory stimuli may induce hypnosis or psychotic states of mind.[1] Music can stimulate the growth of plants,[2] whereas in biomedicine, high frequencies of sound are used to destroy bacteria, nerve tissue, and certain small volumes of the brain, aspirate tumors and eye cataracts, and perform delicate surgery on fetuses.[3] In an aquarium, the

1. Swami Pratyagatmananda. JAPASUTRAM. Ganesh and Co., Madras. 1961. p. 78.

2. ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA JOURNAL 60 (July 1976): 225-228.

Ibid ; 58 (November 1975): 1109-1110.

Peter Tomkins and Christopher Bird. THE SECRET LIFE OF PLANTS. Harper and Row, New York. 1972. p. 59-60. Note that the citation reads: "...in the Ukraine radio frequencies and ultrasonic vibrations had been used to stimulate cereal grain seeds to produce higher yields as far back as the early 1930's..."

3. Julian R. Frederick, ULTRASONIC ENGINEERING, John Wiley and Sons, Inc. New York. 1965. pp. 349, 352.

application of ultrasonic vibration can destroy an entire population of aquatic creatures.[4]

The world of sound is neither limited to our capacity of hearing, nor is it confined to our planet. The fact that a stone, seemingly the most insentient form of matter, emits a "strange music" which is graphed as radiation, tells us that the sound spectrum extends far beyond the narrow range of human audibility.[5] From spacecraft and observatories, sensitive radio telescopes detect the mysterious "sounds" of this universe. In 1965, two Bell Laboratory scientists Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson picked up a faint, uniform hiss on their radio antenna, which physicists later identified as radiation spreading through space from an explosion in the primordial universe.[6] Exploding suns, solar winds, the convulsive upheaval in neighboring galaxies, meteors crashing, and planets spinning through space send forth their cosmic sirens that we on earth receive millions of years later. The heavens are the scene of uncommon violence and activity. Yet to our senses, these "sounds" are virtually nonexistent.

When does sound begin and where does it end ? If all life on this planet were silenced, would sound still exist ? Is sound a mental perception or a physical event ? Does it depend upon wave messengers to transmit it and receivers to detect it ? Does it exist in the world, or is it a signal in the brain ? I hear a sound ; you may hear it more clearly. Is sound relative or absolute ? Is there a perfect capacity of hearing that hears sound itself ? We know that sound can rule our emotions and affect our health ; does it have a still more profound effect on our lives ?

After hundreds of years of research in the physics and psychophysics of sound science still has no answers to these questions. We do not know exactly what sound is ; nor do we know the power behind the spoken word. Not science, but mysticism—although the two draw closer every year—found the clue to the source of sound's power and sound's true essence. The sounds that reach us are but one dimension and a much later stage of sound production. Swami Brahmananda conveyed this fact in the following way:

> One day a fine musician was playing musical scales. Maharaj went into a spiritual mood. A devotee complained that no devotional songs were being played. This jarred Maharaj. He turned to the devotee and said: "Don't you realize that sound is Brahman ?"[7]

The metaphysics of Sound is the hidden science behind the major religions of the world. Through unceasing prayer and repetition of the Holy Name, Sound is the ladder by which man ascends Godward. Through the Word, known in Hinduism as Sphota-vada and the Logos in Christianity,

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Perry, Robert. "Ultrasound: New Medical Marvel." POPULAR MECHANICS. July 1979. pp. 98-99.

Treichel, J.A. "More Uses of Ultrasound Safety". SCIENCE NEWS 121: 398.

4. ULTRASONICS MAGAZINE (November 1976) 14: 281-282.

ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA JOURNAL 60 (July 1976): 275-279.

Julian R. Frederick. ULTRASONIC ENGINEERING. p. 4. Professor P. Langevin, of Toulon, France reported some of the earliest studies of ultrasonic vibration in water (during World War I), which involved the killing of fish.

5. This refers to the piezoelectric effect whereby crystals when mechanically stressed will produce sounds and vice versa. Such a sound source that converts electrical impulses into sounds is called a transducer because it involves the transformation of one kind of vibratory energy into another.

6. Gwynne, Peter ; Begley, Sharon ; Mayer, Allan ; Copeland, Jeff. "Cosmology: Boom or Bust". NEWSWEEK. March 12, 1979. pp. 50, 55

7. Swami Prabhavananda. THE ETERNAL COMPANION. Vedanta Press, Hollywood. 1970 p. 98.

Sound is the channel by which God descends as man. In the Tantric tradition, Shabda, or Sound, is the power of Brahman and the metaphysical law which governs this universe.

Although it is possible that the mystical doctrine of Sound originated independently in Hinduism and the Judeo-Christian religion, it is a well-known fact that Tantric scholars influenced early Christianity and later Western philosophy.[8] The Mantra Shastras of the Tantras present the most comprehensive knowledge of Sound. Based on revelation, these texts lay before us the format of a living spiritual tradition and a superior metaphysical science.

Sound begins at a metaphysical point, the seed of creation and the essence of both matter and energy. The supreme Brahman is Soundlssness; from that source comes Shabda, or Sound, the power of Brahman. From the silence of Brahman, the reservoir of all sounds, issues forth the Sound Om. The meaning of this Sound is the origin of creation. It is the Name of His own reflection. In the Vedas we read:

In the beginning was Brahman, with Whom was the Word; and the Word was verily the Supreme Brahman.[9]

It is the Supreme Sound assumed by the Unmanifest to project His power and behold His own glory.

The metaphysics of Sound tells the story of this universe. Whatever man perceives is centered in "sound" and experienced only through "sound". This world is a manifestation of "sound". The body of man is "solid sound". His mind and senses are organs of "condensed sound". All thoughts are "sound". This universe is a composition of "sounds", heard and unheard. It was conceived in "sound", it lives in "sound", and ultimately it will dissolve in "sound".[10]

Scientists have spotted the shadow of this phenomenon. Behind this world of matter lies another realm of unknown dimensions, replete with the most subtle and vital energy. To quote Werner Heisenberg:

> Energy is...the substance from which all elementary particles, all atoms and therefore all things are made, and energy is that which moves. Energy is a substance, since its total amount does not change...(However) energy can be changed into motion, into heat, into light, and into tension. Energy may be called the fundamental cause for all change in the world...[11]

In the description above, if the word "Shabda" were to be supplanted for "energy", Heisenberg would be describing a central doctrine of Tantra as well as the essence of energy. However, if any physicist could say with authority that Shabda, or Sound, is the primal energy of this universe, he would know the nature of that principle to be the power of Brahman. He would be a man of God.

Physicists agree that sound is the product of vibration. Sound vibrations are waves created by resistance. The resistance is the medium of solid, liquid, or gas through which sound travels.

The concept of "silent sound"—ultrasonics, supersonics, and infrasonics—was devised by modern physicists to explain the phenomena of sounds that are outside the range of human audibility. A jet having crossed the sound barrier or atomic movement in a body of matter are examples of silent sound. Although these vibrations are unheard, sound is produced. According to the theory of vibration, if there is any movement within

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8. Swami Prabhavananda. THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF INDIA. Doubleday and Co., New York. 1963. p. 231.

9. "Prajapatir vai idam agree asit, tasya vag dvitiya asit, vag vai paramam brahma."

10. Swami Pratyagatmananda Saraswati, JAPASUTRAM: THE SCIENCE OF CREATIVE SOUND. Ganesh and Co., Madras. 1971. pp. 3-4.

11. Werner Heisenberg. PHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY. Harper and Row, New York. 1958. p. 63.

the three elementary states—solid, liquid, or gas—sound occurs.

Tantra rejects the physics theory of sound as inadequate to the task of explaining a metaphysical principle. To the scientist, sound is a fact based upon sense perception; to the man of God, it is a spiritual truth revealed through superconscious vision.

According to Tantra, the theory of vibration is the mistaken observation of the manifestation and effect of Shabda. Sound, in this sense, is not confined to the three elementary states, nor is it produced from vibration. It is essentially the cause of the universe and ultimately the effect of Brahman. Not only is Shabda the ancestor of energy, but it engineers all forms of energy. Therefore, Sonnd is the cause and not the effect of vibration, as vibration is but one stage of Shabda. Vibration is but one of the many effects of Shabda, or Sound.

The Tantric doctrine of Sphota-vada can be explained in a few, simple sentences:

There are always two sounds in the words we utter. One is the cause of the sound, and the other is the one that denotes the object. One sound therefore exists in the mind before the second sound exprcsses itself in the uttered words or sound. The nascent sound or the potential, unmanifest sound in the mind is the sphota. This sphota is the Shabda Brahman or the Nada* Brahman in Indian metaphysics...Its message is that every thought or every idea is a sound. The moment you think, you make a sound, though you do not hear it.[12]

All "sound" is consciousness. The Cosmic Consciousness oscillates between the potential and the kinetic. Just as our own actions are kindled by thought, so also this universe is the outcome of the Cosmic seed of Consciousness, called Sphota. This Para-shabda, or Supreme Sound, is transcendental and non-vibratory.

Creation is the result of an idea, and all ideas are "sound". To quote Swami Vivekananda:

All this exprcssed, sensible universe is the form, and behind it stands the eternal, inexpressible Sphota, the manifester, or Logos, or Word. This eternal Sphota, the essential and eternal material of all ideas or names, is the power through which the Lord creates the universe.[13]

In other words, energy is a fleeting thought and matter a more condensed thought. Above all, this creation is an extension of His Thought. The Word is the power of Brahman, one with Brahman—evolving into this universe while still remaining what it is. In this sense, man is created in His image.

By His Mind He united with Para-shabda. That Sound is Om, the first movement of Brahman, referred to in the Tantric scriptures as the Causal Stress, or Static Sound. It is the colossal focal tension between Brahman and its power, the One and the many, between the Creator and His creation. From this Cosmic seed of Sound, the power of Brahman is released as primal energy that seizes its expression in a world of space and time. This phenomenon is beautifully expressed in the Psalms:

By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.[14]

In the Sanskrit tradition, the beginning of creation is represented in the syllable Om as the dot above the upturned crescent. The dot, called Bindu, symbolizes the cosmic point which has neither position nor magnitude and from which this universe is born and into which it is withdrawn. The

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* Nada is another name for Shabda.

12. Swami Pratyagatmananda. JAPASUTRAM. Ganesh and Co., Madras. 1961. p. 71.

13. Swami Vivekananda. KARMA AND BHAKTI YOGA. Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center. New York. 1970. p. 151.

14. King James Version. HOLY BIBLE. Thomas Nelson, Publishers. New York. 1972. Psalms 33:6.

crescent is called Nada It represents the first and most subtle movement of sound—kriya shakti, the power of divine will.[15]

The Nada-bindu image of creation is not exclusive to Hindu symbology. We find in CHILDREN OF THE RAINBOW, a fascinating record of pre-Christian Hawaii:

> Another symbol for Creator was written somewhat similarly to our letter C It began with a tiny dot at the upper tip of the C which meant "life unfolded from the Creator and descended from heaven unto this earth"[16]

Furthermore, in an eighteenth century anonymous mystical work published by Le Mystere de la Croix, one of the French Protestants of the desert, we read:

> Before all things were, there was a Point, not the atom or mathematical point but the diffusive In the One there was implicitly contained the many There was light and darkness beginning and end everything and nothing: being and non-being[17]

Again, Saint Clement of Alexandria, of the second century, referred to the Nada-bindu symbol when he wrote that if one were to abstract from its properties, "the point which remains is a unit, having position: from which if we abstract, there is the notion of unity."[18] Shelley alluded to this symbol in "Prometheus" when he wrote: "Plunge into eternity where recorded time seems but a point."

The Word Om is an immense Sound to the Cosmic Ear This Primal Sound out of which the universe evolves is audible in the deepest meditation. So sacred is this Sound that in the Jewish mystical tradition, the tetragrammaton, or Name of the Most High, is considered too devastating to be spoken aloud in the worship of the synagogue It is the Jewish belief that:

> He who can rightly pronounce it causeth heaven and earth to tremble For it is the Name that rusheth through the universe[19]

The quality of this original Sound is unimaginable Its power and magnitude are immeasurable We know for a fact that jet noise can shatter glass and high frequency sound can crack metals As the sound wave shortens, its frequency heightens and, so also, its force intensifies. However, the shortest wavelength of sound cannot even approximate the Sound that is without wavelength or vibration Para-shabda is not energy; it is a power

We begin to feel the mystery of our existence and a power greater than ourselves as we travel "sound" to its zenith To quote Sir John Woodroffe:

> Where does the Extended universe go at the Great Dissolution? It collapses so to speak into a Point This point. is without any magnitude whatever...(and) has in fact no position For there is no notion of space This is a symbol, and a symbol borrowed from our present experience cannot adequately represent any state beyond it.[20]

What is that awesome state between being and non-being, that point in time—that point where time begins—when, to quote Dr Hawking, one of the foremost cosmologists of this age, "the very meaning of time becomes very uncertain, very badly defined. "?[21]

If we turn our gaze to the heavens, there

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15. Ghanananda, Swami "The Science of Mantra or the Sacred Word" MEDITATION· MONKS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, London 1974 p 120

16. Leinani Melville CHILDREN OF THE RAINBOW Theosophical Publishing House Wheaton, Illinois. 1969 p 110

17 Sir John Woodroffe GARLAND OF LETTERS Ganesh and Co, Madras 1974 pp 129-130

18. Ibid, p 130.

19. Anonymous

20. Sir John Woodroffe GARLAND OF LETTERS pp 130-131

21. Michael Harwood THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE. January 23, 1983 p 53,

exists a phenomenon that surpasses our wildest imagination and has enabled scientists to take a giant step back in time—perhaps fifteen to twenty billion years—to the origin of creation. Can it be that a black hole is what the Tantric scriptures laid before the world thousands of years ago as the Nada-bindu point of creation ?

A black hole is the natural death of a giant star—a catastrophic gravitational collapse, whereby matter literally compresses and crushes itself out of existence. It is a self-hiding celestial body, whose presence can only be detected by its gravitational effects on other bodies of matter as well as by the warp it creates in space: In the language of science, the black hole is known as a singularity:

> A point that might be fantastically, infinitely small, a theoretical edge of space and time. Toward that edge, that miniscule point, races at unimaginable speed all the matter sucked into the black hole, all the matter of a star or even a universe, to be crushed into a region of infinite density from which nothing escapes and where none of the known laws of physics apply.[22]

What scientists feel they may have discovered is not merely energy, but the motive power of the universe. If a mass the size of earth, compressed into a mini-black hole no larger than an atom, can generate the build-up of such vast energy in the form of heat and gamma rays that its eventual explosion after billions of years is comparable to that of a million hydrogen bombs, how can we conceive the force of an entire universe that has involuted and collapsed into an atomic-size black hole ?

Black holes display other astonishing attributes. They may vary according to size, and they grow in density as matter is sucked into their gravitational fields and pulverized into oblivion. However, the uncanny fact remains: the edge of a black hole is, in the words of Professor John Taylor, "the surface on which time stands still, and immortality is created."[23] What does this mean ? A space traveller approaching the edge of a black hole can clock his arrival time. However to an onlooker, the traveller's spaceship slows down as it approaches, what is called, "event horizon". In fact, it never reaches the border. Rather, it freezes, as it were, because at event horizon time stops.[24]

How can we understand such a phenomenon ? We cannot. Such properties resemble divine attributes. According to Dr. Hawking, this singularity is the inscrutable stuff that universes are made of. Creation begins with just such a singularity. The Big Bang occurred in a space no bigger than a pin head. And to this very small size, approaching absolute zero, the universe will eventually fall back in on itself.[25]

Religion is science deified. However, though science is leading us to the door of the shrine, it is religion that bids us to enter. The phenomenal point of creation and destruction, where astrophysics, particle physics, and science are converging as the key to our existence is Shabda, Sound Brahman.

The whole universe is lying hidden within its cause, or seed-form, which is nothing but the Self. The universe is His own body of Bliss—the Cosmic Sound projected and concretized. The growth of the universe is a pulsing forth of the bindu ; at death, it shrinks into that from which it evolved. To quote Professor John Taylor:

> The black-hole universe certainly affects the way we can understand life and ourselves...(We) are at one with the universe since we are energy mani-

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22. Ibid ; p. 54.

23. John G. Taylor. BLACK HOLES. Avon, New York. 1973. p. 77.

24. Ibid ; p. 65.

25. NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, January 23, 1983. p. 54.

festations, as is the rest...We must be humble in the face of the laws of the world, and especially those governing the black-hole universe. Our ultimate fate is collapse. Beyond that is the still unknowable part of infinity.[26]

The principle of creation is like a vessel of water when shaken. There is first a general movement. Then there are diverse, particular movements that produce time, space, and causation. With the descent of Sound, gunas act and react. Combinations of "sounds" issue forth and recombine into compounded "sounds" that send forth the laws of the universe.

According to the Mantra Shastras, there are three stages of Shabda. *Pashyanti* is called "luminous sound." It creates infinite time—the light of the universe. *Madhyama* is "sound" that forms dimensions—curves, shapes, figures, and sizes. It encloses space and thus creates the receptacle of this universe. *Vaikhari* is "coagulated sound." This "sound" produces the elementary states of matter—solid, liquid, and gas.[27]

Each form has a "sound" equivalent. The Sound which precedes its form on the subtler planes of existence is called a Natural Name, represented by a *Bija*, or seed word. The Natural Name is what the Cosmic Ear hears as the intrinsic nature of a particular form, whether animate or inanimate. It approximates the sound of activity within the object so named. For example, the Natural Name of a tree would be inextricably connected to the sound of its sap running. So also, when the kundalini rises and pierces the centers of consciousness, the sound of that phenomenon corresponds to the *Bija* of each center.[28] Approximations of Natural Names are heard by yogis. When they are spoken, they become compounded and diffused sounds which form the letters of the alphabet. Therefore all letters are considered forms of Shakti. They are sound powers.

A Natural Name is inseparably linked with the object named. This is the theory behind Indian music. Each raga has a particular shape, based on the sound-vibration and the subsequent pattern these vibrations take. With a tuning fork, we can see for ourselves how sound causes fine sand particles to redistribute their mass and form new patterns.

Through Shabda any object can be made, remade, or unmade. Even in the physical world experiments have shown how sound can modify shapes. When sand is placed on the flexible membrane of an eidophone (an instrument which also consists of a tube and receiver) and music is played, geometric patterns corresponding to each note of the scale are formed. Sometimes these patterns become flowers with well-defined petals, stars, spirals, or snakes. These patterns can be sustained through crescendo and diminuendo.[29]

Shabda is power; and by the power of the Name, a form is materialized. This principle is the axis on which spiritual life turns. Religious songs can materialize the object of their devotion,[30] and the *Bija mantra* is believed to shape the mind into the form of the Chosen Ideal it represents. The mind becomes purified by the purity of its contents, invoked by the thought

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26. John G. Taylor. BLACK HOLES. p. 198-199.

27. Swami Pratyagatmananda. JAPASUTRAM. 1961. pp. 72-77.

28. Ghanananda, Swami. "The Science of Mantra or the Sacred Word." MEDITATION: MONKS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER. p. 119. The citation reads: "We have already referred to the natural name of a moving object, say the rising sap in a tree, or in yogic language the rising of the kundalini power in men from the basic centre to the higher centres. A natural name is, therefore, the sound produced by the generating stress (shakti or power) or constituting forces of a thing...by the supreme and infinite ear..."

29. M.P. Pandit. JAPA. Dipti Publications, Pondicherry. Madras. 1971. pp. 5-7.

30. Ibid; pp. 7-8.

vibration of the sacred seed word, which is the Sound Body of God.

Just as the Chosen Ideal of God has a *Bija mantra*, or primary Natural Name so also has each man a Natural Name corresponding to his respective causal body This is the "sound" of man's inner being and the power that fashions his body, mind, and senses.[31]

Where in man is that metaphysical point where consciousness enters, where life begins ? The mystery of creation takes place in the *muladhara*, an unseen center situated at the base of the spine. From this seat of consciousness, Shabda as the Muladhara-shakti gives life to the jiva.[32]

The macrocosm reveals the microcosm. So also cosmic creation reveals the miracle of life. The cosmic Nada-bindu, infinite consciousness and power, contains within itself all worlds and beings about to be created. In the embryo of man, the Nada-bindu is the coiled kundalini—the magazine of power that creates the phenomenal structure of human life and upon which the spiritual aspirant draws in order to transcend the body, mind, and senses.

The body can be compared to a magnet with two poles whose fields are "sound". On the biological level, creation starts with a cell which, on the metaphysical level, involves within itself a static and dynamic pole. The two poles act on themselves, creating a network of impulses that spawn and nourish other cells and evolve into a psycho-physical being. In this connection, Sir John Woodroffe writes:

> (The Kundalini) ejects, so to say, a dynamic pole out of it in order to evolve the body, but remaining a static pole or background itself all altogether, or even curtailed its three coils and half. Without this Muladhara-Shakti (Nada-bindu) remaining intact no evolution could be possible at all. It is the hinge upon which everything else turns.[33]

The kundalini at the *muladhara* is Para-shabda. Could this also be the repository of the genetic code ?

Shabda literally means "to make sound". Shabda is not produced ; it manifests. It is the efficient and material cause of the universe. Energy and matter, mind and spirit, birth, life, and death are modes of this one Existence which is Sound.

There are three stages of sound-production. The first is *shabda*, or sound. The second is *artha*, the meaning. It can also be *spanda*, or movement, which is at the back of sound. *Spanda* is the vital energy, the breath, as it were, that conveys shabda. The third component is *pratyaya*, mental apprehension. *Shabda*, *artha*, and *pratyaya* comprise sound and produce *dhvani*, or sound in motion. Only as Sound unfolds from the non-vibratory stage to the stage of vibration is *dhvani* produced. Therefore, though *dhvani* is sound, Sound is not always *dhvani*.

Sound is a three-fold process that occurs on both the physical and mental level. When a voice speaks and is heard there is sound. And when a thought arises in the mind and is cognized "sound" occurs. The mind is a cauldron of "sounds". By controlling the thought-process—the flash of nerve impulses from the name to the form

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31. Swami Pratyagatmananda. JAPASUTRAM: THE SCIENCE OF CREATIVE SOUND. p. 102. The citation reads: "Each thing has a bija mantra...Each one of us has a bija mantra, and therefore the power instralled in our mind by the preceptor at the time of initiation must accord with the seed power resident in us."

31. Sir John Woodroffe. THE GARLAND OF LETTERS. p. 65. "Just as a Devata has a Bija mantra or Primary Natural Name so has each other individual Jiva, corresponding to their respective causal bodies, and these may be heard in varying degree by finer ears and fully by the Absolute Ear."

32. Ibid ; p. 278.

33. Sir John Woodroffe. THE SERPENT POWER. Dover Publications, Inc. New York. 1974. p. 303.

it denotes—a spiritual aspirant can separate shabda, artha, and pratyaya and travel Sound to its starting point. From the Source, the yogi hears Sound as it is. Coming down from that vantage point, he then can understand all sounds—acoustical, animal, and human.[34]

By turning to the sages of ancient India, we may explore a world of sound that is otherwise hidden from twentieth-century man—a world where sound is a much broader principle than our scientific theory. From this inward experience we may probe a deeper meaning than the laws of physics which describe the relative world. Sound is the heartline of this universe, and that Sound is another name for Self. What symbol, then, can best describe this origin and center of the universe ?

It is Mother Kali ; She is Para-shabda. Around her neck She wears the garland of letters, symbols that speak Her untold creations. She is the Supreme Sound behind all languages and the one Reality that they signify. Her garland of lettered sounds reveals the power of the Word. Her name is eternal, and the forty-nine letters of the alphabet all symbolize the various aspects of this one Godhead.

Kali stands alone in the cremation ground, the death arena of Her Great Dissolution. Devourer of time, She is Kali, the timeless principle, and withdraws unto Herself all letters and words and the manifold worlds they denote. She is naked, clothed in space alone ; and She is dark, the Black One, devoid of all attributes and beyond mind and speech. She is the beginning, the middle, and the end. She is Brahman.

The great Goddess rests Her foot on the body of Shiva, the unlimited principle of Soundlessness with which She is one. He is the vast reservoir of silence from which all sounds issue forth. Installed before us, this fierce Goddess humbles us. Her eyes are piercing and Her mouth is open as She is about to utter the Supreme Sound, whose lines of destiny send forth time and space and by whose power She names Her own form.

No sound on earth is comparable to Her Sound. No crack of thunder, no volcanic eruption or atomic explosion can near the power and majesty of Para-shabda. Through this Sound, Kali breathes life into every sound and form of sound and articulates the arousal of Her primal energy. Kali is the pulsating point of consciousness that the mystics hear as "the sweet murmuring motion of the kundalini." By that Sound, the causal waters churn, and the world of Sound begins with the Self-manifestation of the Non-dual.

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34. Ghanananda, Swami. "The Science of Mantra or the Sacred Word." MEDITATION: MONKS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER. p. 118. "By rising to the highest plane a yogi can directly experience any or all kinds of sounds."

Ref. Swami Saradananda. THE GREAT MASTER. Sri Ramakrishna Math. Madras. Fourth Edition. II. 11. 23. p. 201. We are reminded of the period during Sri Ramakrishna's Tantric sadhana when he heard the Anahata, "which is the aggregate of all the different sounds of the universe. Some of us heard this from the Master himself and also heard him say that he could at that time understand the meanings of the cries of all animals."

WORLD WITHOUT WAR: APPROACH OF THE U.N. CHARTER

DR. ANIL BARAN RAY

The United Nations was formed on 24 October 1945 with the avowed objective of establishing a world without war. In the language of the Charter, the aim was 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind'. It should be revealing to examine why the United Nations failed to achieve this objective. There are numerous reasons, mainly political, behind this failure. The purpose here is not to examine them all in detail, but to make an analysis of the United Nations Charter itself showing that the 'ghost lay in mustard itself' and that a new philosophy is required in international relations for tackling the problems of war and peace.

If we are to follow clearly the full import or the significance of the UN Charter's approach to war, we must first make a beginning of our understanding with the approach of the League of Nations. The Covenant of the League of Nations, it should be made very clear at the outset, did not declare war as illegal ; it only sought to *prevent* war by various means. The trouble with the drafting of the League Covenant was that the term 'war' was used in the Covenant and the Covenant being a legal document the use of the term 'war' in this document signified a war in the *legal sense.* A war in the *legal sense* has its own technical meaning, which, in terms of Article 1 of the Third Hague Convention of 1907, connotes that there cannot be a war in the legal sense without a formal declaration, either in the form of a specific declaration stating reasons or of an ultimatum with a conditional declaration of war. It is known to students of history and international relations that during the inter-war period the designing states such as Italy, in order to evade the restrictions of the League Covenant, invented a novel technique, that is, of plunging into large-scale hostilities without a formal declaration. The League had to watch hopelessly in the face of the Italian plea that country could not be called guilty of breach of the Covenant, because, after all, there was no *war in the legal sense* between Italy and Abyssinia.

The drafters of the UN Charter were acutely aware of the legal quibble such as mentioned above and this realization led them to adopt a completely different approach to the UN Charter. It was laid down in Article 2 paragraph 4 that 'All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations'. The most noteworthy in this drafting is the omission of the term 'war' and the inclusion in its place of the terms 'threat or use of force'. The drafters of the Charter meant to say that all use of force, whether formally declared as war or not, that is against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state or contrary to the purposes of the United Nations, shall come within the purview of the United Nations Charter.

Having satisfied with this particular drafting of this particular clause of the UN Charter, the framers of the Charter thought that they had really been able to improve upon the League of Nations in this that they were able to banish war from the United Nations arena. They were sadly mistaken, because despite their draftsmanship and caution, the provisions of the UN Charter itself provided the scope for war in certain cases. The provisions containing 'gaps' and therefore constituting potential

sources of war relate to Article 2 (paragraph 1), Article 51, Article 42, and Article 27 of UN Charter. These are discussed below.

Article, 2 (paragraph 7) states: 'Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter'. Apparently, this seems to be an innocent article and may even be thought to be in consistence with the existing conception of sovereignty of states. But behind the facade of innocence, it contains a source of danger in this that a fight initially begun between two sections of the same state may escalate into large-scale hostilities involving outside sympathisers and thereby threatening international peace and security. It is not that the United Nations cannot handle such a situation. It can. The Security Council has been given the power to do so on behalf of the United Nations in Article 39 of the Charter. But, as we know from our observations of the operative style of the world body, and in view of the initial prohibition contained in Article 2 (paragraph 1), it is not only possible but probable that the United Nations will be rather disinclined to take measures towards the effective handling of such situations. Article 2 (paragraph 7) that is to say, may well be a source of discord, disharmony, and even 'lawful' war in the international community.

Let us take the case of Article 51 next. This article states: 'Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.' One may ask: What is wrong with it ? Is it not natural that as in the case of a man, so in the case of a nation or a state, there should be a right of self-defence ? That there should be a right of self-defence of a state is perfectly valid, especially when it cannot go too far in view of the Security Council's authorized ability to intervene. But the trouble with this stipulation lies on two counts—first, a designing state may take the cover of this article and may deliberately create a situation for war, which, in real terms, will be representative not to much of war in self-defence as of war in self-aggrandizement. Secondly, the Security Council, despite its power on paper, may not be willing or may even be unable to take 'necessary measures' at the appropriate time. With either of these two things happening, Article 51 may well be a source of 'nuisance' to the international community.

Article 42 which provides another occasion for a legal war under the Charter represents the greener side of the grass. Under this article the United Nations as the world body and as the representative of the world community can take action collectively against a lawbreaking or recalcitrant state. It needs no saying that this is an extremely commendable article and though it provides an occasion for a legal war, it is perfectly in accordance with the purposes of the United Nations. Under the terms of this article the Security Council 'may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security'. In order to provide 'teeth' to this article, the Charter (Article 43) required the Members to make available to the Security Council armed forces, assistance and facilities, including rights of passage, under the terms of a special agreement or agreements to be concluded 'as soon as possible'. In continuation of this stipulation Article 47 required the Members to constitute a Military Staff Committee 'to advise and assist the Security Council on all questions relating to the Security Council's military requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security'. Needless to point out that up till

now there has neither been any conclusion of special agreements providing armed forces etc. to the Security Council, nor the constitution of a Military Staff Committee by the Members of the United Nations, rendering thereby the *good* provisions contained in Articles 42 through Article 47 rather useless.

But the gap in the charter which pales all others into insignificance and is now regarded as the most fertile source of legal war under the Charter is to be found in Article 27 which deals with what is called veto. Veto means the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council. No decision of the Security Council on 'non-procedural or substantive matters can have any legal effect if a single permanent member uses a negative vote. This means that if a permanent member is involved in a war or a war-like situation or any of the States of the world which enjoys the patronage of any of the five permanent members is deliberately 'injurious' to another state, the Security Council cannot take any action against the wrong-doing state, because either the permanent member concerned will use veto on its own behalf or on behalf of its protege. Realities of international politics being what they are and the world being divided into two hostile camps led respectively by the United States and the Soviet Union, the 'paralysis' of the Security Council on contentious issues is more often than not the case. From the paralysis of the Security Council it may only be a step forward for the disputing Members towards settling the issue by the arbitrament of the sword. We see, then, how Article 27 could provide the fountainhead of war in the international community today.

Now, the point is that the malady does not lie with the veto as such. Veto is nothing but a symbol, nothing but a symptom of disease, the roots of which lie elsewhere. In an organization based on the principle of sovereign equality of all the Member-states, the unequal provision of veto had to be kept under the compulsion of circumstances. Otherwise, the World organization might not have come into being at all. If the two superpowers representing two 'camps' had operated on the premise of mutual cooperation, as they were pledged and expected to do, then the veto would not have been a problem. But that was not to be. Their basic suspicion and distrust of each other surfaced soon after the founding of the world body and the veto is the outward manifestation of their mutual disbelief.

Veto represents another very important psychological drive on the part of the superpowers. They really do not believe in international parity, despite repeated professions to that effect. What they are incessantly driving at or what is always at the back of their mind is the desire for *superiority*. Each wants to have an edge over the other. That is the reason for their ceaseless competition in all fields, the reason especially for their ferocious race in armaments. That is the reason why the SALT fails, why the star war programmes go on, why the nuclear weapons get stockpiled, even though with the existing stockpile the world can be destroyed not less than twenty times, if not more. They seem to believe that the superiority in armaments will ensure their security. And yet how irrational it is! The nuclear war leaves no victor behind. It can only result in mutual annihilation and total destruction. With their scientific and technical expertise, and knowledge none knows the end-result of the nuclear war better than the super powers themselves and yet if they are running neck to neck in the deadly race for armaments, the reason has to be traced in their psychology, in their pathological disbelief, suspicion, and hatred of each other.

II

Now that we know the roots of the

malaise and the basic reasons for the failure of the United Nations to rid the world of sickness in the form of wars and conflicts, can we suggest any 'cure' for the malaise or any way to root out the disease ? The only permanent cure could come out of the adoption and sincere practice of a new philosophy in international relations. The dictum that lies at the heart of this philosophy is not annihilation, not mutual destruction, not even simple tolerance but positive assimilation. And that could happen only when a sincere desire for give and take (frankly, more of give than take) springs from the innermost recesses of the heart of the superpowers, and the powerful states of the world.

We are well aware that the change of heart cannot come about overnight. It can only follow the change of attitude. Basic to the change of attitude is the realization on the part of the leaders and statesmen of the world that national boundaries are the artificial creations of man for the sake of administrative convenience. This world, the humanity, in fact, the whole universe, has one single creator—call Him by whatever name you like. All creations, most of all, the man is related to the divine creator through the 'brain power'. Man does 'good' to others because his brain power tells him that it is good to do good to others. Doing good to others fills man with a sublime sense of bliss which is far superior to the sense pleasures which come out of satisfaction of bodily senses or which grow out of the gratification of certain mundane interests. All men are striving for that sense of goodness in some way or other. The only snag is that man does not realize that that is his mission in life. To reduce men to the level of creature of material interest with no mission in life other than the struggle for the protection and promotion of power and mundane interests, is to do violence to man. Man is far above that. Incessantly he is striving for freedom. And that freedom he attains only in the realization or actualization of his innate goodness which makes him one with the supremely Good or the Absolute.

In the light of such philosophy of life the statesmen of the world have to change their attitude, the conceptual frame of their thinking. The existing and predominant conception of sovereign, absolute, and independent states hungering for power and power only in international relations, has to be changed and replaced with the positive thinking of doing good to humanity. Humanity is but one family. This world is one single unit. The spirit of helping men and women in need anywhere on earth, is in the total interest of humanity.

The sceptic might raise his eyebrow at such holistic philosophy as nothing but bubbles of sentiment, liable to burst at the first moment of its contact with the realities of international power politics. That may be true in the present state of 'vitiated' power politics in the world, but that does not mean that such a holistic approach in politics is, in the long run, worthless. Things of lasting value take their own time to gain acceptance.

It is true that so long as there are interests, and exclusive at that, there will be conflicts between man and man, as between state and state. We do not say that conflicts will evaporate overnight. But they certainly be contained if we adopt a certain framework of thinking.

The first golden rule in this framework of thinking is that men, as states, must practise equity or equitableness in their dealings and patterns of behaviour. The Indian ideal tells us *atmavat sarvabhuteshu*, which means 'Thou shall not do to others what you do not want others to do to you. Do unto others as you wish to be done by.' 'Universalize your conduct', as Kant says, and the fighters may find that they have made this world a definitely better one.

Fortunately, the recent trend in world

politics is in this direction only. The recent summits between the two superpowers, Soviet Union's offering of star-peace programme against star-wars, Gorbachev's appeal for a nuclear-war-free world, to one thousand world celebrities gathered in Kremlin on 17 February 1987, President Reagan's and Gorbachev's signing the accord in Washington,—all these point to a new beginning in world politics, a chapter which might fulfil the dream of U.N. Charter.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S VISION OF COMPLETE MAN AND TODAY'S POLITICAL THOUGHTS—II

SWAMI SOMESWARANANDA

(*Continued from the previous issue*)

Dilemma of science

Some people think that science can solve the problem of modern man. It is true that science has helped mankind to be rational, it has freed men from the onslaught of nature to a great extent with its technology. Today man has almost all the amenities he needs—gadgets, car, telephone, computer, robot and of course, medicine and surgical instruments. But the question remains: Where are we heading with all these amenities and gadgets ? The computer thinks on behalf of us, and for all the clerical jobs ; a robot does all the manual jobs. Today we have got plenty of leisure time. In the Roman civilization the slaves used to do all the jobs while the citizens enjoyed. Are we trying to achieve the same goal where robots, computers and other electrical gadgets will do all the work ? If it is so, how shall we spend our time ? History shows that if people remain busy with enjoyment, they will be ruined like the Romans.

Secondly, though the doctors have invented psycho-active drugs and other tranquilizers to solve acute psychic problems, yet the very idea is based on a wrong notion. Tranquilizers suppress the brain-activities and thus do not allow the thoughts to come up and disturb man. But at the same time extensive use of these makes one dull. Moreover, it does not solve the root problem. In fact, when one gets frustrated, dejected, feels lonely or feels alienated, there is nothing wrong with his brain. It is not the brain but a wrong approach to life which is responsible for psychosomatic illness. Unless this is corrected, the problem will not be solved. A right approach to life is urgently needed. But science ignores these ideas as it considers itself ethically neutral. Science and technology have given us a lot of objective freedom, but unless there is subjective freedom, the inner freedom, it will not be possible for people to use their objective freedom in the right direction. That is why, today we are to struggle hard against an impending nuclear war.

Western psychology, philosophy, and literature

What about the Western psychology and philosophy ? Do not these try to solve the root problems of modern man ? About India's problems Swamiji write, 'O India! Anglicised India! Do not forget, child,

that there are in this society problems that neither you nor your Western Guru can yet grasp the meaning of—much less solve'.

Among the Western psychologists there are mainly five schools advocating five kinds of approach: neuro-biological, behavioural, cognitive, psycho-analytic, and humanistic approach. All of these try to cure human beings psychologically. But how can one win over one's aggressive nature? A neuro-biologist investigates the brain mechanism which is responsible for such behaviour. He will advise a drug or surgery in that particular region of the brain which makes one aggressive. In extreme cases such a surgery may be useful, but it can never be used in general. A behaviourist suggests the modification of the environmental condition to provide a set of learning experiences that reward non-aggressive people. A cognitive psychologist also prescribes a similar approach though he focusses more on the thought-processes and reasoning of the individual when he is confronted with anger-rousing situations. A humanist psychologist is also concerned with changing social priorities, and providing conditions that promote man's potential for constructive and cooperative actions. All these three schools stress on the ideal condition of society. According to them, if one can adjust to the norms of the society, one is normal, and society should encourage all to follow the general norms and values by providing reward and punishment. The question is: if a society is corrupt, why should one adjust to it? Moreover, every government thinks that its society is the most ideal, atleast in theory, and it introduces reward and punishment to compel the people to follow its directives. Every government controls the educational and other policies which it thinks will safeguard its interest. Ultimately people are asked to toe the line of the government. Overtly or covertly, every government tries to mould its people. And if in the name of 'being normal' one is asked to conform to the norms of a particular kind of politicised or unethical society, where is his freedom?

Moreover, if one likes to revolt against one's government and society, will he be considered abnormal? Of course, we do not say hat an ideal environment is unnecessary. What we mean is that mere environment is not enough, one needs something else. The Bolshevik Russians also once believed that if they could continue their totalitarian, communist system for more than two generations, the third generation people will become the ideal communists. But recent experiences in Russia have proved its futility. Similar is the case with China. Despite the dogma that only environment can change a man, the fact remains that unless there is an inner urge, mere external factors cannot help in the long run. Marx believed that if the mode of production could be changed into a socialistic pattern, the society will be an ideal one, and the workers will be more enthusiastic in their work. But can it be said now that Russian or Chinese workers are more enthusiastic than the Japanese workers? In his recent book *Perestroika* (the New Way of Thinking), Gorbachev speaks of 'undeserved privileges accumulated in Russian working classes and beurocracies,' which need be immediately removed. Marx emphasized the social character of man and, neglected the totality of the social, moral, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects which make an individual.

The most accepted method by the psychiatrists is the process of psycho-analysis. A psychoanalyst probes the patient's unconscious to discover his childhood or later experiences which direct the patient to be hostile toward certain people or situations. He then tries to redirect it into new channel. Frend is the originator of this school. Though this process is the most accepted one, yet Freud himself was pessimistic about the possibility of a new world where people

could live in unbroken friendship. According to him, eros and death instinct in man are always against each other, and it is doubtful whether man will be ever at peace because society is basically a structure which works against the basic human nature, by imposing restrictions on his total freedom. According to him, man is guided by some basic urges—primarily sex and aggression—and men cannot win over these tendencies ultimately. Swami Vivekananda differed from this much publicised western view. While Freud spoke of the basic urges as evil propensities, Swamiji spoke of them as dormant powers struggling to regain infinite freedom and divinity. According to Swamiji, man is basically divine, while evils have accumulated only temporarily as a crust on his divinity. Religion helps one to increase the good or divine qualities and ultimately conquer the evil tendencies. Swamiji said: 'Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man.' While Freud noticed the 'devil already in man' Swamiji noted 'the divinity already in man'. Perhaps Freud, though a Jew, was influenced unconsciously by the Biblical idea of 'original sin'. Western psychology needs to dive deeper and in this attempt it may take the help of the Indian Yoga. Freudianism has already been rejected by the trans-personal psychology of post-Freudians like Abraham Maslow and R. D. Laing.

Various Western philosophies tried to solve the problem of human existence. They tried to be logical. Kant spoke of the 'thing-in-itself,' Hegel of the 'absolute idea' Sartre of the 'Pour Soi,' Bergson of the 'elan vital'.

Are these just logical conclusions ? If these are mere logical conclusions, in future these may be refuted by a different logic! Logic is a strong weapon no doubt, but its power is limited. If the logic of Mr. x depends on his knowledge, the logic of Mr. y depends on y's knowledge. Even the greatest scholar in the modern world has his knowledge which is limited. That is why Vedanta asks us to transcend logic in order to have direct realization of the Truth. 'The superconscious transcends the reason but contradicts it never,' said Vivekananda.

Marx also spoke of the limitation of philosophical views. But he could not identify the real problem. According to him, when the philosopher represents a particular class, i.e., economic class, his philosophy is bound to be a class-philosophy. But it is not so. Bacon and Descartes were contemporary, and both came from aristocrate families, yet they differed in their views. Marcus Aurelius was an emperor, while Epictetus was a slave. Yet their philosophical views were nearly the same. Earlier we said that many Marxists now-a-days admit that one can and does transcend one's class-consciousness. Did not Marx himself do it in his life ? He was born in a bourgeoise family, was influenced in his childhood by Ludvic Von Vestafalen who held high post in the government, got married in an aristocrat family, and his closest friend Engles was an industrialist. But Marx was not influenced or guided by the class-consciousness of the rich! Unfortunately Marx could detect only two steps in man's journey—as a member of caste and then of class. Though in the 'German ideology' he spoke of the individual aspect of the human beings, he did neither explain nor explore the point further. Swami Vivekananda was more objective, rational, and comprehensive in his view than Marx in analysing the true nature of man.

Now let us consider the case of Western literature. Dramatists, poets, novelists, and other literateur, inspired by the Existential Philosophy, tried to solve the problem of human existence. According to Franz Kafka, men are basically helpless. They may try to solve their existential problem but ultimately it is all futile. In his famous novels 'The Trial' and 'The Castle,' he has elaborated this idea. Camus, in his 'Myth of

Sisyphus' told the same story. One cherishes one's dreams and ambitions, but he never reaches it, and he can never reach it. Samuel Becket in his 'Waiting for Godot' portrays how man's hopes and aspirations finally turn void. Man hopes, desires, expects, and waits for a better living, for a meaningful life, but it is never fulfilled. Eugine Ionesco pictures human nature as always worried and anxious to save itself from the unknown fear. Throughout his life man is afraid of his imaginary fear, and that is symbolised in 'Rhino'.

The root problem

Where lies the problem ? The basic point is that man tries to have psychological fulfilment by achieving his ideal. He wants to be a poet, or an engineer, a parliamentarian, an artist, a wealthy person, and all that. If his present position is 'x' and the goal is 'y', it means that he likes to go from 'x' to 'y'. Why does he so desire ? Because he thinks that he is now unfulfilled and at 'y' he will be fulfilled. He feels he is having fragmentary existence at 'x' and he will be full at 'y', or that he is ignorant at 'x' and he will become wise at 'y'. Now if he is really ignorant, unfulfilled and fragmented at 'x' then 'x' represents a confused state. 'Confused' because it is not as wise as 'y'. If this is the case, that is, if 'x' is really a confused state, then 'y' is only a projection of a confused state. Therefore in spite of achievement and success, there is no lasting contentment. Camus, Ionesco, Kafka and Becket could not identify this root problem. They did not realize the basic problem of human existence. The problem is not actually at 'y', but at 'x'. If 'x' is basically confused, whatever it does, will be 'confused'. And that is why in this kind of literature man cannot have a clear vision of what he really needs.

What is the basic need ? One should and must get rid of this confusion. This should be the starting point. The confusion is basically in the mind of man. Man should, therefore, start with his mind and should try to discover his basic confusion. He should be aware of his mind's activities. He desires so many things, but what is his real need ? Unless he discovers that, he will go on running after many things, objects, and persons and yet get no fulfilment. This is why the Vedanta considers the self-knowledge as the most important. To quote Swami Vivekananda: 'And this is the real, practical side of Vedanta. It does not destroy the world, but it explains it ; it does not destroy the person, but explains him ; it does not destroy the individuality, but explains it by showing the real individuality. It does not show that this world is vain and does not exist, but it says, "Understand what this world is, so that it may not hurt you." '

What is psychological fulfilment ? Swamiji in one of his lectures said: 'I do not see that what you call progress in the world is other than the multiplication of desires.' In fact psychological fulfilment is a kind of feeling. It is a mental wave, and because of its being a wave, it has got both rise and fall. It goes up and then comes down. Thus lasting satisfaction is impossible if one searches it only in the external factors of his environment. Happiness is a subjective feeling. It has no objective existence outside. Let us explain. Suppose Mr. x desires to have a sweetmeat. Why does he want it ? Because he thinks that pleasure is in it, and so if he gets it, he will have the pleasure that is contained in it. And if he achieves this aim, i.e. getting the sweetmeat, he thinks or considers himself fulfilled. Now the question is: Is pleasure present in that sweetmeat ? If it were so, why do many people not like sweets ? Why do they not get pleasure in taking a sweetmeat ? Sweetness is the intrinsic quality of a sweetmeat, as chilly is hot, or pickles are sour. But pleasure is not the intrinsic quality of

sweetmeat. And that is why, everyone does not get pleasure in taking a sweetmeat. When Mr. x gets pleasure in it, it is he who projects this pleasure-quality. The same is the case with 'beauty' after which so many kings and common men and women have been running through the ages. They are still running after it. Is beauty an intrinsic quality or a projected quality ? Was Othello's beauty in the face of the black moore, or was it in the eyes of Desdemona ? A fair-complexioned man or woman is the standard of beauty in India, while the Europeans tann their skin to be handsome or pretty. The Chinese concept of beauty is a flat nose, while the Europeans like sharp nose. Thus beauty is also a projected quality. This is one of the basic confusions. People cannot differentiate between the intrinsic quality and projected quality. They consider their projected idea of quality as something objective, and expect the object or person to fit into that projected quality. And thus they always remain dissatisfied. Unless one discovers the distinction between appearance and reality, one will remain in confusion. Without self-knowledge, self-fulfilment is nothing but ego-perpetuation, and self-expansion is only self-assertion. And that is why an attempt for self-fulfilment generally brings chaos in this world.

Spirituality and this age

Modern man needs spirituality, as Swamiji observed. Many of the people are religious no doubt ; but just to be religious is not enough. One should be spiritual. Mere belief and rituals are not enough, one should have some kind of spiritual illumination at least. According to Swamiji religion is realization of the undying and all-powerful Spirit within.

At the same time religious views should be liberal. It should keep its door open even to the atheists. Here the Vedanta plays a great role. Its approach is different from other religions. Other religions start generally with some axioms like God, liberation, heaven, hell, and a holy book as the gospel, the God's words etc. Atheists and agnostics cannot, obviously, accept these views. Moreover, modern men are gradually loosing faith not only in God, but also in his own dear and near ones. He who cannot have faith in his wife or parents with whom he lives and moves, how can he have faith in God ?

Religious preachers must become aware of this fact, the social reality, before preaching religion to modern men and women. People's knowledge has increased a lot. With the increase of education, people study philosophy and science which encourage them to think freely. If religion has to satisfy the modern men, it must allow them to ask questions. And here the Vedanta plays the most important role. Vedanta does not force anyone to accept any axiom, or to accept anything blindly. Rather it starts with empirical facts, and offers a rational approach. That is why, *vichara* or discrimination is the watch-word of the Vedantic sadhana.

At the same time Vedanta satisfies people with different mentalities. People, by and large, can be classified broadly into four groups: rational or logical, emotional, active, and mystic. Swami Vivekananda prescribed the paths of Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga respectively for them. Unless a religion satisfies all sorts of people it cannot be universal. Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of such a universal principle, and his illustrious teachings helped Swamiji to grasp and preach the idea of Vedanta as a universal religion. Time and again, he spoke of the need of realization of this broad, spiritual truth. Unless one has some awakening of one's spiritual awareness through any of these four paths, one cannot claim oneself to be religious. To quote Swamiji,

Each soul is potentially divine.

The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal.

Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.

This is the whole of religion. Doctrines and dogmas, or rituals or books, or temples or forms are but secondary details.

Elsewhere he says, 'Have your own Bible. Have your own Christ. Otherwise you are not religious.... No church ever saved by itself. It is good to be born in a temple, but woe unto the person who dies in a temple or church.' Scripture contains spiritual truth. Swamiji asks us to realize the truth ourselves. This is the significance of 'Have your own Bible'. The real saviour is the man himself, his inner divinity. That is why Swamiji says, 'Have your own Christ'. He also means that for a novice, disciplines are necessary but one should struggle to reach the state where disciplines are spontaneous, where these are not the outcome of any rules or fear. At this stage only man achieves his total freedom and true individuality.

Vedantic approach

How does the Vedanta help one to solve one's existential problem ? How does it help him to be free ? By showing the path to a meaningful life. One should live a meaningful life—meaningful to himself and to the society. If one serves the society without any sef-interest, one's life becomes meaningful to the society. Why should one serve the society ? Because everyone takes the help of it. Since childhood the government helps him to be educated at the expense of the poor. The money which the government collects as tax, comes not only from the rich and middle classes but from the poor also, as all have to pay indirect taxes. The educated one, therefore, should pay back by serving the society, specially the poor. Secondly, irrespective of government help, each individual is indebted to the society in which he grows, and therefore he has got some duty to it. Next, his life should be meaningful to him also. Man gets bored with his daily routine life. Any mechanical repetition brings some sort of dullness of the mind. One feels monotony. It generates inertia which is named as the *tamo-guna* by the Indian saints. To get rid of that inertia, he likes to get a kick. Action-packed film, gambling, hot drinks, and other sense-indulgence provide him with such kicks. This kick generates a stir in the mind. This stir brings some sort of action, and *rajo-guna* is generated in the mind. But the cycle of inertia-kick-sensation - inertia-kick-sensation-inertia goes on and on. Life becomes meaningless once again. The Vedanta shows the next step—the way to spiritual awareness or meditation. This awareness which brings a spontaneous change by exploring new dimensions of life, is known, according to Indian saints, as the effect of *sattva-guna*. Through this spiritual awakening, one can come out of the clutch of the earlier cycle, and finally realize his or her innate divinity. That is why Sri Ramakrishna repeatedly said: *tomader chaitanya hok*—'Let your spiritual awareness be awakened'.

And meditation helps one to have the real peace. Physical enjoyments make one tired. It exhausts one's physical and mental energy. But in meditation though one enjoys tranquility of the mind, it does not make one tired, rather the energy gets restored and the mind gets relaxed. When one enjoys something, one gets bored after some days, but in meditation one never gets bored with the tranquilled mind. On the contrary its charm gets deeper as it is repeated again and again.

Enjoyment hypnotizes a man while meditation helps man to understand and dehypnotize himself. Swami Vivekananda, in his books *Jnana Yoga* and *Raja Yoga* dealt with this meditation and awareness at length.

Swamiji, in his motto *atmano mokshartham jagaddhitaya cha*—for one's own emancipation and for the good of the people—combined the two aspects, social and individual which can make one's life meaningful both to himself and society. A spiritually enlightened individual with an unselfish and genuine concern to serve his fellow-beings, an individual enriched intellectually, emotionally, rationally, socially, and above all spiritually—is Swamiji's vision of complete man. Modern world needs to accept this vision and translate it into action.

(Concluded)

REFLECTIONS ON THE MEANING OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA FOR WOMEN—II

[*Bhairavi Brahmani*]

(Continued from the previous issue)

ANN MYREN

By now Sri Ramakrishna was twenty-five and had learned many things from two vitally important women in this life, his mother and Rani Rasmani. He had also married Sarada Devi who was to become incomparably significant in his life and mission. In addition to these three women, a few months after Rani Rasmani's death, there came a fourth woman of great significance into his life. Beautiful, graceful and about forty, this stately, spirited woman dressed in ochre and carrying a bundle of books, climbed the steps of the ghat ; she was none other than the Bhairavi Brahmani. (Estimates of the Bhairavi's age range from late thirties to fifty.) The Master was picking flowers in the garden and as soon as he saw the sannyasini, he sent Hriday to bring her to his room.[30]

Hriday objected, saying that the woman was a stranger and would not come at all. Sri Ramakrishna insisted ; he knew that she would come. When asked by Hriday, she came without hesitation. So began the six-year association of the Master and the Bhairavi Brahmani in which she was the teacher and he was the disciple. The Bhairavi was his *first* spiritual teacher. Although he had received the mantras appropriate for the rituals he performed, he had had no previous teacher who directed his spiritual disciplines and interpreted his spiritual attainments.

Not a great deal is known about the Bhairavi Brahmani other than she was born in the district of Jessore in East Bengal in a Brahmin family. She was spiritually distinguished, a yogin and a scholar, a teacher of the Tantrika sadhana and a great Vaishnava devotee. The Bhairavi was full of philosophical wisdom and knowledge of spiritual practices. The Divine Mother had revealed to her that she was to meet and instruct three spiritual aspirants. Two of these she had already met and instructed before she came to Dakshineswar. When she found Sri Ramakrishna on the banks of

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30. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, trans. Swami Jagadananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1952), pp. 185-6.

the Ganga as had been foretold, she was overjoyed.[31]

When these two great lovers of God met in Sri Ramakrishna's room in the Kuthi, there was much to be said, many questions to be asked, and visions to be described. The Master opened his heart to the Brahmani as if she were his mother, and she adopted a motherly attitude toward him which she kept throughout their relationship. Sri Ramakrishna asked her about all of the things which had been bothering him. Was he mad ? What did the burning sensation of his body mean ? Did he have some disease ? Why was he sleepless ? With her extensive knowledge of spiritual life and religious literature, she explained to him the unusual conditions which beset him. As Hriday observed, they talked like two close relative. So the day passed and it came time for the Bhairavi to eat.

The Brahmani got food from the temple where provisions were made available to wandering monks. Then she went to the Panchavati to prepare the food and offer it to Raghuvir, i.e., Rama before she ate. (Raghuvir was also the deity of Sri Ramakrishna's family.) Her meditation at this time was unusually deep ; she had a vision and tears of love flowed from her eyes. Unaware of this drama, the Master, who had been meditating elsewhere, went to the Panchavati. In a trance he ate the food that had been prepared as an offering to Raghuvir. When the Brahmani opened her eyes, she saw before her the actual scene which had been revealed to her in her meditation. Astonished and full of joy, she reassured Sri Ramakrishna, who was, when he returned to normal consciousness, concerned over his unusual behaviour. He was not, she insisted, in anyway abnormal. The Bhairavi had come to a conclusion based on her meditation as to who had eaten the food. We can only speculate on this point ; she did not make an outright declaration about who had done it, but thereafter she no longer felt the need to do ceremonial worship because she had 'obtained the permanent living vision of Raghuvir in the body and mind of the Master.'[32] Is it any wonder that this woman, the Bhairavi Brahmani, in due time, declared the Master a divine incarnation ?

But before the famous pundits confirmed the Bhairavi's belief that Sri Ramakrishna was an incarnation of God, two important things happened. First, the Brahmani became the Master's teacher. While she resided at the Dakshineswar temple. Sri Ramakrishna and the Brahmani would spend hours together discussing his experiences, moods, feelings, and concentration on God, in short, his madness for God. She assured him that according to the literature on these subjects his responses were those of a highly advanced, sincerely dedicated soul. The second important event took place a week or so later. It had occurred to the Master that people might not understand the relationship of the Bhairavi to him and question the propriety of her living there at Dakshineswar. It was decided that she would live in a village nearby and come to visit Sri Ramakrishna every day to instruct him. She moved to that village, Ariadaha, and lived on Devamandal's Ghat.[33]

The Brahmani was a Vaishnava and it was natural, therefore, for her to take on the mood of mother in her relationship with the Master. She would long to feed him with delicacies as a mother would her child, do so, and the Master responded like a child. Here we see the relationship, already established by the Master with the Divine Mother, which he had learned first,

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31. *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1948) pp. 114-5.

32. Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master,* op. cit., pp. 186-7.

33. *Life of Sri Ramakrishna,* op. cit., p. 118.

so perfectly, from his own mother, Chandra Devi. It is during this period, actually in 1863, that the Master's mother came to live at Dakshineswar and share his room in the Kuthi (the owner's residence) with him. In this year he also took his mother with him on a pilgrimage to Allahabad.[34] By now he had established his lifelong filial attitude toward women, which is so basic in his teaching for modern men and women.

While living at Ariadaha, the Brahmani used to dress up in a silk cloth and ornaments and lead a procession of women to Dakshineswar. They would sing songs reminiscent of Yasoda's love for Krishna.[35] The biography of Sri Ramakrishna does not elaborate on this activity. But it seems clear from the evidence that women did indeed come to Dakshineswar, that Sri Ramakrishna talked to them, and instructed them.

The most notable incident in the life of Sri Ramakrishna in which the Brahmani played the principal part was her declaration that the Master was an incarnation of God such as Krishna, Rama or Chaitanya. To discuss this question it was agreed that meeting of pundits or scholars should be held. The two most eminent pundits, Vaishnava Charan and Gauri, declared that Sri Ramakrishna was indeed an incarnation of God.[36] Truly this was a momentous conclusion. However, for our purposes we must examine the meaning of the Brahmani's participation in this historic meeting.

That the Brahmani was the first person to note the similarities between Sri Ramakrishna and other incarnations of God, shows how perceptive she was. A scholar, she formulated her conclusion on observation of the Master and her knowledge of scriptural authority. Why, we may ask, did this unusual task of declaring the Master an incarnation fall to the Brahmani? The fact that the discoverer of the Divinity of Sri Ramakrishna was a woman affirms the idea that the Master's life was important to the destiny of women. By her declaration of Sri Ramakrishna's Divinity, the Bhairavi stands out as a woman of keen insight and profound knowledge. The Brahmani served two purposes in the drama of Sri Ramakrishna, the incarnation. She served as a prophet in her declaration of his Divinity, and she was the feminine embodiment of divinely inspired knowledge. After all, the goddess of knowledge is universally female, and the Brahmani manifested the knowledge aspect of this female divinity when she became the teacher of Sri Ramakrishna.

After the meeting of the pundits was over and things settled down, the Master set himself to practising the Tantra disciplines in which, at the bidding of Divine Mother, the Master was instructed by the Bhairavi Brahmani. Although he had been engaged in realizing God for six or seven years, he had never had a formal teacher to instruct him. This most unusual woman had knowledge of all sixty-four kinds of Tantra sadhana, and could safely lead the Master through these difficult practices. He was a quick disciple, never spending more than three days on any single practice. In regard to this period of the Master's sadhana, two important points must be made. First, the Master accepted a woman as his teacher, giving to her the most honoured position in the Indian tradition, that of guru. In so honouring the Bhairavi, he gave honour to all women. And second, the fact that a woman was the teacher of an incarnation of God indicates that this is an epoch in which women will be particularly glorified.

Certain aspects of the Master's relationship to the Brahmani are illuminating. For example, the Master told her 'everything,

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34. Ibid., p. 224n.
35. Ibid., p. 118.
36. Christopher Isherwood, *Ramakrishna and His Disciples* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1965) pp. 96-8.

all that had happened to him in his spiritual life, his visions, his moods, and his experiences. His confidence points to the absolute trust he had in the Bhairavi and his belief in her knowledge and wisdom. Another aspect of his sadhana involves the nature of the Tantra disciplines which emphasize Divine Motherhood and the glorification of woman.[37] Although these practices have been debased and used improperly, Sri Ramakrishna's practice was perfectly pure.

Through these Tantric practices the Master realized that in the universe there is an ever active feminine principle, which is expressed as the Divine Mother. He further had the experience, after he offered his body, mind, in short, all of himself to the Mother, of being pervaded completely by the fire of knowledge, an aspect of the Divine Mother. He also had the vision of the Brahmayoni, the divine womb, giving birth to countless worlds every moment. In addition he also saw 'the Divine Mother herself dwelling in the female form'.[38] These realizations of the feminine aspect of God indicate that Sri Ramakrishna's mission is inextricably tied up with the destiny of women. This is not to say that other aspirants have not had realizations of the Divine Mother ; they of course have. But the fact that the Master is a world teacher gives his realizations of God as feminine a special significance. Through his experiences he became thoroughly familiar with the power of the feminine. We see that the Master's knowledge of the universal feminine principle was the fruition of the Bhairavi's expert instruction.

The Brahmani seems to have remained the Master's active teacher from the time she came around 1861 until 1864 when Totapuri came to teach him non-dual Vedanta. Detailed information is somewhat scant about the Brahmani's instruction. Swami Saradananda believed that Sri Ramakrishna was helped by the Brahmani in the Vaishnava bhavas or moods of *Vatsalya*, maternal affection toward the child Krishna, and *Madhura*, the sweet mood in which the attitude of a woman towards her lover is adopted.[39]

In the *vatsalya* mood the Master was initiated by Jatadhari, a wandering monk, with the mantra of the divine child, Ramlala. Sri Ramakrishna regarded himself as a mother in order to experience the love a mother feels for the child. The Master did not perform these acts superficially, but actually became completely immersed in the different moods. He said again and again that there can be no cheating in the abode of the mind. Therefore when he undertook the practice of a mood, he expressed the mood both inwardly and outwardly. In fact, he felt that he was truly Ramlala's dearest person in life, like mother. Further, he came to realize that 'Rama, who is the son of Dasaratha, is in every being ; the same Rama is immanent in the universe and yet transcends it.'[40] In other words, God is present in every jiva. Did he experience the feeling of being the mother of all the living souls ?

Knowing as we do the one-pointedness of the Master's mind, we can see how he came to feel that he was a woman. In addition to feeling like a woman, he acted like one. He began to mingle freely with the women of Mathur's family, and they in turn came to look upon him as one of their own gender. During this period while in the feminine mood, he also worshipped the Divine Mother as her companion or handmaiden.[41] This, however, was not the end

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37. T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Outlines of Hinduism* (Bombay: Chetana Limited, 1956), pp. 205-6.

38. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, op. cit., pp. 200-1.

39. Ibid., p. 215.

40. Ibid. p. 215.

41. Swami Nikhilananda, trans. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, 1952) pp. 24-5.

of the Master's spiritual practice in the mood as a woman.

Next, Sri Ramakrishna regarded himself as one of the *gopis* of Vrindavan, mad with longing for the beloved Krishna. In this practice he dressed himself as a woman. Mathur got him all of the necessary clothing and jewellery. Wanting to play the part perfectly, the Master also wore a wig and gold ornaments. He was so successful playing his part, that he became feminine in every way, in gesture, speech, and attitudes. Of course, this is what he wanted to do on his path of God-realization. He wanted to be mad with the love for Krishna, lose himself in his love, and as Radha, merge into Krishna. However, this could not be done without the grace of Radha, whose love of Krishna was absolute and absolutely pure. Therefore, he prayed to Radha for a vision of Krishna. The Master soon had a vision of Radha which culminated in her entering into his body. Later he had the longed-for visions of Krishna.[42]

Several years later in 1868 when the Master was on pilgrimage to Vrindaban, his identification with Radha was fully revealed. This episode is described in his own words:

> Ganga Mai used to take great care of me. She was very old and lived all alone in a hut near Nidhuvan. Seeing my condition and loss of consciousness in Samadhi, she often said, 'This is verily Radha reincarnated in flesh and blood!' She used to address me as Dulali [a pet name for Sri Radha]. When I was in her company I forgot all about food and drink, or returning to my quarters. On some days Hriday would bring food to her hut and feed me. Ganga Mai, too, used to prepare various things for me. She had frequent trances, which attracted crowds. I had no desire to leave her; so it was settled that I should remain. I was to take boiled rice. Ganga Mai was to have her bed at one end of the room and I at other. It was arranged in every detail. Then Hriday said, 'You are so subject to stomach complaints, who will look after yon?' 'Why', said Ganga Mai, 'I will look after him. I will serve him.' Well, here was Hriday pulling me by one hand and Ganga Mai by the other. At this moment I was reminded of my mother, who was living alone in the concert-room of the Kali temple at Dakshineswar. I thought, 'Who will look after her if I remain in Vrindavan?' This decided me. I said, 'No, I must go.'[43]

From this account we see that the practices which he had undertaken as a woman devotee of Krishna, came to complete fruition. Furthermore, we see that his love for his mother always remained a paramount consideration in his life.

We can also see that Sri Ramakrishna had become, in effect, transformed into a woman. And as he did everything with his whole heart and soul, he became immersed in the feminine mode. In Mathur's family the women accepted him as one of themselves. He would act as an older and more experienced woman friend toward the daughters of Mathur. When one of the daughters' husband came, the Master would dress her hair and decorate her with ornaments. Next, he would instruct her in the correct deportment toward her husband, and finally he would take her to meet her husband. He did everything that a woman friend would do for a younger woman.[44]

What is the significance of these spiritual practice as Radha in which he experienced the very highest love, *madhura bhava*, by transcending the limitations of the body? The Master experienced love as Radha on the divine plane, giving the world an unparalleled example of ideal love.

However, we need to look beyond the immediate results of his experiences in order to understand the entire meaning of Sri Ramakrishna's practices in the feminine mode. There are two interpretations we must consider: first, the meaning in terms of the personality of the Master; and second, the meaning for women of this age.

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42. *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, op. cit., pp. 236-7.

43. *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, op. cit., p. 230.

44. *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, op. cit., p. 234.

As Swami Saradananda pointed out, the Master had a 'dual personality'. He could move from the masculine mode of expression to the feminine. The Master came to uplift all humanity by raising women. But how was he to do this ? He had to manifest the feminine side of his nature to show the intrinsic and cosmic value of the feminine. To do this he needed the experience which a woman has of her own nature and of her relation to God.

Further, there are other reasons more specific in nature, as to why the Master took on the feminine attitude in his spiritual practices. These were tried and true practices, supported by religious texts. Obviously these practices are reserved for a few specially qualified seekers of God. Now, when we consider the universality of Sri Ramakrishna's message, we can guess that in adopting the feminine mode, the Master demonstrated that woman's emotions have an inherent value and nobility. By affirming these fundamental qualities he demonstrated that women have their own special contribution to make in spiritual life.

Still another reason for Sri Ramakrishna's practice of the feminine mode was that he came to establish the dharma for the new age. Everything he did, his actions, thoughts, ideas, practices, philosophy, absolutely everything, hold utmost singnificance for our lives. He is the universal teacher. But how could this great God-man be the perfect teacher for women ? Only by understanding women in the deepest way, that is, through their deepest feelings, through the emotions that are unique to women. On the human level he learned the nature of woman by living with women as a woman. On the divine level he knew what it was to feel the accumulated sufferings of the world and devotion of Sita, and what it was to love Krishna as Radha loved him, and also to feel the anguish of separation. He knew what it was to feel like the mother of a divine child. And he recognized in every woman the Divine Mother whom he worshipped. No other avatar has had such a complete experience of the feminine. In short, he brought into the consciousness of the world the divinity of woman.

This is an age of universality. The teacher for the age must express this universality. That is why this God-man, Sri Ramakrishna, gave such great emphasis to the feminine in his life and practices. His purpose was to bring woman into full partnership with man for the benefit of all humanity. 'Hence, there was in the Ramakrishna Incaranation', as Swami Vivekananda said, 'the acceptance of a woman as the Guru, hence his practising in the woman's garb and frame of mind, hence too, His preaching the motherhood of women as representations of the Divine Mother.'[45] The Master has again and again showed us the glory of woman. Her power has been awakened. This *is* a new epoch for humanity, because it is a new epoch for woman, a time in which women will soar to new heights in spirituality. And with the flowering of the divinity of woman, all humanity will benefit from the expression of her capacities in every line of activity.

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45. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1956) vol. 6, p. 330.

A REVERIE IN THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS

TUMKEN BAGRA

And then ? And then Comrade Cruschev, the then Russian Premier, while in an interview with Dr. B. C. Roy, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, sometime in the 50's of this century at the Raj Bhawan in Calcutta, invited the latter to pay a visit to the USSR. What was the reply of the Doctor ? Oh! Yes! Dr. Roy told, God willing, he would do it. And then do you know what happened ? Comrade shuddered and frowned at Dr. Roy's belief in God! It's a blasphemy! That was USSR, a land where theology and Church, Religion and temples, Allah and the Mosque, were forbidden terms. At least till later half of the 60's this was the popular estimation about Moscow the Mecca for the followers of a particular politico-philosophy (?). But, readers! (excuse me for my protracted imagination!) I do not know if there is still a G.B.S. to proclaim: 'If I happen to meet him (Cruschev ?) either in heaven or in hell, I'll tell him: Dear, great comrade! God bless you! But your human experiment is a failure.' And... If there is an Antony, he will tell about Dr. Roy: 'This was a Man!' Readers! (please do not mistake me to be raving—... no! not at all!! I say to mean! I mean to say ....) I was quite complacent till the other day; absolutely no problem... But then ? then... the Editorial column of *Prabuddha Bharata*, March issue of 1987 gave me a tremendous jolt, as it were, in the words of a romanticist of English Literature: 'I slept and dreamt etc./I woke and found etc.' Believe me, Readers, believe me! It was revelation for me! Please do not ask me any more, please....! It's secret and sacred!!! Moreover, who knows Tranquilizers may be required for some people if they hear the incident. (?) But you are serious people! How can I mince matter with you!! No—no! I must tell you. Yes, I must! Come on! Listen to the Editorial! Listen! What the editorial says ; By jove don't disclose it to so many and too many! Only cherish it in your 'heart of hearts'! At least that is what is our sages' prescriptions regarding matters like this: Ah! Listen!

One of our swamis who had recently visited Russia had a new experience. As he was listening to musicians in an international music festival held in Moscow, an old Russian lady came forward and asked him 'Are you a swami from India ?' When the swami nodded his assent, the lady asked again, 'Are you a swami of Ramakrishna ?' With the second assent, her face now glowed with a smile. 'I, too, am a devotee of Ramakrishna. We are one hundred such in our group. We knew him through Romain Rolland's book. We meditate on him. Swami, you are indeed a very holy person, as you belong to Ramakrishna. I am not fit to sit in the same row along with you' she said. Despite all the persuations of the swami, the old lady took her seat in a back row! When the festival was over, she again approached the swami in utter reverence, with the words, 'swami kindly give me through your holy self, the blessings of Ramakrishna'. Deeply moved, the swami remembered his master and raised his hands in benediction. For some moments, she got buried in the living presence of the God of this age.

Yes! Very right! Very startling!!!! But can you interpret this as a miracle of Sri Ramakrishna ? Perhaps not! Sri Ramakrishna is working out His miracle elsewhere....! It's across the MacMohan line, where the first Lower Primary School was established in 1948—one year after independence! Reader! believe me, forget not! It can't but be a miracle that across the MacMohan Line infested with insurmountable mountains and inaccessible jungles, the 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of the 'Ramakrishna Order' (perhaps the smallest, youngest but very powerful order of monks in the contemporary world) were

celebrated with all pomp and gaiety, enthusiasm and spontaneity, with all vigour and virility! Readers! Believe me ; I am not telling a lie! Thanks to I & B Minister! Kudos to Guwahati Door-Darshan!! Ask them Readers! Ask them!! I am confident they will certify the veracity of my statement. Listen to our swamiji:

'What more miracle you want from my Master ?'

Victory unto Guru Maharaj!

By His subtle presence Sri Ramakrishna blessed Arunachal Pradesh (then called NEFA) in 1966. 'How was it ?'... Jack asks. Yea! That's right!! I forgot to tell you the story... This is this. Just in the wake of SINO aggression in 1962, a group of Tribal leaders of Siang division of this remote part of the country went on a 'Bharat Darshan' tour. In course of their sojourn, they had been to Delhi and had a shocking experience.... What's that ? While exchanging notes with dignitaries of Delhi, they had to take the help of interpreter which, they thought, was below dignity. And then ?.... On their return, they went to Shillong and met the head of NEFA administration. Mr. Boken Ette, a Lincoln-like leader of Siang district told the ADGA (Adviser to Governor)—'we feel small when we find ourselves misfit for conversing with top brasses of our country.... but then you must do something so that our descendents can speak to even the first citizen of our Mother India...' Had there been a personal witness to that dialogue, he alone could have told whether colonel's heart bled at this or not....!

And then, in view of the 'non-proselytyzing' nature and 'Excellence of education' imparted by the 'Mission' of 'Ramakrishna', Ramakrishna Mission was approached ; Sri Ramakrishna stepped into 'Arunachal Pradesh' in the form of 'Tribal Child'—with 35 children the Master initiated His Play. And now ? Sri Ramakrishna and His Mission is a household name in this remote state of our *Mother India*—be it in Mechuka or Manigaon, Tawang or Tangavalley, Itanagar or Pasighat, Along or Khonsa.

Jack heaves a deep sigh! Thereafter ?.... asks Jack. Is it not a miracle that Sri Ramakrishna's institution was adjudged the best of its kind throughout the length and breadth of this country ? Is it not a miracle that His tribal children emerge as Runners-up in Subroto Cup in National Level ? Jack! How many more ? How many more instances you want ? Don't you get surprised to hear when a Nishi or a Nocte boy gets 2nd Prize at National Science Seminar or aadi boys get position in the National Merit List of Central Board's Examinations ? That's why we feel that while Swamiji says—'Let New India arise.... out of the hills and mountains', it is, as it were, meant for these tribals of Arunachal Pradesh. Today excellence (be it in the field of education or health) and, Ramakrishna Mission are almost synonymous. It is 'Ramakrishna' with its 'Mission' which has put Arunachal Pradesh in the blessings of Sri Ramakrishna, to put it poetically, Arunachal Pradesh has become,

'Perfection's pilgrim, touch with votive brow
The foot of the one transcendent Himalaya!'

A READER'S EXPERIENCE

N. GOPINATH

I was strolling along the Sampige road of Malleswaram, Bangalore, when I found second-hand books piled on a pavement for sale, and there were none looking after the books.

Usually such scene creates a strong desire

in me to inquire and search for the old and out-of-print books of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature. As I was to begin the search, a man came from the opposite shop and thrust an old volume in the midst of the books. Soon I picked it up and, what more, it turned out to be none other than *Life of Swami Vivekananda* by His Eastern and Western Disciples, of 1923 edition or so.

'What is the price ?' I asked, holding the book.

'Thirty rupees', he said.

'Thirty rupees ? Why so much ?', I asked again. Although all the pages of the book were there, the thick covering sheets were missing. On the whole the book had an unimpressive look.

'See the size of the book', he said (it was containing nearly 1000 pages) 'and also this is a very old book and now out of print!'.

'Stil the price is high', I grumbled.

'In that case, give me twenty-eight rupees!'

'No'.

'Then how much can you pay ?'

'Five rupees!' I replied, without knowing what I was uttering.

'Five rupees!', retorted the middle-aged person whose acquaintance with the literature of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, I thought, might be casual. His face brimming with anger, he roared, 'Do you know the value and importance of Swami Vivekananda ?' I considered myself a person whose acquaintance with that branch of literature was nearly for twenty-five years, and I thought myself to be a devotee of the trio, Sri Ramakrishna-Holy Mother-Vivekananda! 'Is Vivekananda an ordinary person to be born off and on ?' he said, 'Know that such persons are born once in a thousand years! You want the book on him for five rupees ? How awkward! You are not fit for reading such books! You are fit to read *Chandamama* and *Balamitra* (children story-books), and you can get the same for your price. Go and read the same!'.

Needless to say, I failed to purchase the book. Still, whenever I ponder over the incident, I feel wonder-struck about the power dormant in the very name of Vivekananda that turned an average looking man into a roaring lion, and made me learn a lesson that is hard to forget in life.

BROTHER LAWRENCE

(A Review-article)

[THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD: By Brother Lawrence.
Published by Samata Books, 10 Kamaraj Bhavan, 573 Mount Road, Madras 600 006.
Pp. 102. Rs. 35.]

This small but beautiful and extremely valuable book contains a brief character sketch of the celebrated saint and his teachings in the form of conversations and letters in four parts. The first part contains the spiritual maxims of the saint which explains in simple terms the method of the highest type of spiritual practice namely the worship of Spirit by the spirit through a continual and uninterrupted communion of the soul with God. The second part 'Gathered Thoughts' brings together the scattered, valuable sayings of the saint knit into an orderly fashion, The third part contains some rare 'Conversations' the saint had with like-minded devotees of God,

These are arranged chronologically and sometimes throw light on some of the hidden aspects of his otherwise unassuming life. The last part contains sixteen of his inspired 'Letters' of advice to several religious and holy persons.

The author of the book, Nicholas Herman of Lorraine, more commonly known as Brother Lawrence (1611-1691 A.D.) is considered one of the greatest mystics of Christendom, who combined in his life action and contemplation with such perfection that for nearly forty years of his life, he hardly ever turned away from the presence of God in spite of his heavy duties. A lowly born and unlearned man, at the age of eighteen he became a soldier and footman. It was at that time that a great transformation came upon his life. In the winter he saw a tree stripped of its leaves which flashed upon his soul the evanescence of life and providential existence of God. So great and so sublime was this vision that even after forty years, the experience was still green in his mind, reminding him of the transitoriness and emptiness of the world.

At the age of 55 he joined as a lay brother in a Carmelite monastery in Paris. There the unlearned man was set to work in a kitchen which duty he converted into an intense and unceasing prayer to God. He says, 'We can do little things for God. I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for the love of Him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before Him, who has given me the grace to work ; afterwards I rise happier than a King. It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God.'

He performed every work for the sake of God with a childlike trust in Him, 'O God, since thou art with me, and it is Thy will that I must now apply myself to these outward duties, I beseech Thee, assist me with Thy grace that I may continue in Thy presence ; and to this end, be with me in my work, accept the labour of my hands, and be within my heart in all Fullness.'

To him the practice of the Presence of God was a continual exercise. He realized that it was a delusion to think that the time of prayer was different from other times, and that a true seeker was strictly obliged to adhere to God by action in the time of action as by prayer in its season. 'In the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great a tranquillity as if I am upon my knees at the blessed sacrament,' he said.

To attain to this state of continual recollection of God, he advocates, not any penances or a particular set of devotions, neither any art or science, but the cultivation of a simple child-like virtue of faith in God. All our acts of worship are to be prompted and guided by faith. Whatever others say, whatever is found in books are savourless, dull and heavy when compared with the faith unfolded by the unspeakable riches of God. Faith alone can reveal Him or teach us what He is. It is a marvellous virtue, which illumines the spirit of man and leads him on to the knowledge of his creator. It is a virtue, altogether lovely, so little known, and still less practised, yet which once known, is so glorious, so full of unspeakable blessing. This path of faith is the spirit of true spiritual life and leads us to a great perfection.

This faith is achieved as a result of the destruction of our little egos. The greatest glory we can give to God is to distrust our own strength utterly, and to commit ourselves to His safe-keeping. Brother Lawrence says that we must quit the things of the outward sense, destroy the love of the self, deny all bodily tastes and pleasures and hold ourselves before God like a poor, dumb, paralytic beggar at a rich man's gate.

In all events of life he saw plainly the working of the Divine Will and this kept

him in perfect peace. He did nothing which might displease God. Not a trace of self could one discover in his character nor any prejudices arising from natural attachments. By sacrificing his will to God he sought God's glory in everything. His highest offering to God was to quit the things of the outward senses and to withdraw and worship Him in the secret chamber of his soul. He renounced generously, with a single heart, for the love of Him, all that was not His, and stayed united to God's will. Once when he was ill, a man of great sanctity came to him and asked him which he would choose, if God permitted him, whether to live a little longer to grow in holiness, or to receive him at once into heaven. Quick came the reply that he would leave the choice to God ; that he had nothing else to do but to wait in peace till God should show him what was His Will.

Such was the thrilling and glorious life of this lowly born and unlearned man of God. In his old age he suffered from ill health but he considered pain as a blessing from God. He did not pray to God to be delivered from troubles but he sought to get strength and patience to bear them as long as He pleases. He was happy to suffer for Him. Ordinary men consider sickness and pain as coming from nature and not as a favour of God. That is why they experience in sickness only grief and distress. But Brother Lawrence saw sickness as coming from God, as the effect of His mercy, as the means God employs for his salvation and so found in it great sweetness and sensible consolation. God sends diseases of the body to cure those of the soul. Pain and sufferings were paradise to him since he suffered for the sake of God. Without it, he said, the greatest pleasures of life would be a hell. Grief is a token of God's love for us. When one loves God, who is the Father of the afflicted and Physician of all our ills, pain is sweetened into joy and courage. The sorest afflictions never trouble us when we see in them the hand of our Loving Father. Then our sufferings lose their bitterness and mourning becomes all joy.

During his last days, when he was intensely suffering from pain on the right side, he bade his brothers to turn him to right side. When they wanted to relieve his pain by turning him to the left, he said, 'I thank you, brother, but I beg of you to let me bear just a little for the love of God.' Then he repeated these verses from the Psalm 'Create in me a clean heart, O God. Cast me not away from Thy presence. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.'

His faith during the last moments was so strong that one of his brothers came forward to ask him if he really knew the mystery of Living God, and if he really deserved God's love. Brother Lawrence answered, 'I agree, but I should not wish to know it for fear of vanity. We can do nothing better than abandon ourselves to God'. After he received the last Sacraments, a brother asked him if he was easy and what his mind was busied with. He replied like a true Jnani and Bhakta ; 'I am doing what I shall do, through all eternity—blessing God, praising God, adoring God, giving Him the love of my whole heart. It is our business, my brethren, to worship Him and love Him, without thought of anything else.' He died at the ripe age of eighty. S. Clemente of Alexandria once said that the great business of a philosopher is prayer. His life proved it.

For Brother Lawrence God was real and more real than all the earthly knowledge, things, or power. On him did indeed the grace of God descend, as he never ceased to be in the presence of God. And in the glow of that Mighty presence, his life burnt like a flame of ceaseless prayer, total surrender, absolute assurance and endless faith. 'Let what may come of it, however many be the days remaining to me, I will do all things for the Love of God,' he said.

And thus in *forgetting* self, he had in truth lived in the perpetual presence of God.

The little booklet gives us religion in practice. We see with wonder and joy how an ordinary unlearned man became one of the greatest saints of Christianity, simply by faith, service, and egolessness. The small volume of 102 pages is a great book in the religious literature of the world.

SWAMI ABHIRAMANANDA
Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama,
Bangalore.

NEWS AND REPORTS

REPORT OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION BELUR MATH, FOR 1986-87

Issued by the General Secretary

Ramakrishna Mission, on 14 *December* 1987

The 78th Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at Belur Math on Sunday the 13th December, 1987, at 3.30 p.m. Swami Gambhirananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission, was the Chairman of the proceedings. A synopsis of the report of the Governing Body for 1986-87, placed before the meeting, is as follows:

The year happened to be the centenary year of the founding of the Ramakrishna Order. It also marked the completion of 150 years of the advent of Sri Ramakrishna, the Prophet of harmony of all religions. Both the occasions were celebrated in an appropriate manner both in India and abroad. The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, organized a three-day seminar on Sri Ramakrishna, in collaboration with the Academy of Sciences and the Union of Writers, Moscow. A number of centres in other countries organized inter-religious conferences. The Ramakrishna Order was represented in the 'International Forum for a Nuclear-free World for the Survival of Humanity', held at Moscow, under the sponsorship of the Soviet Government.

In the year under report, the Mission spent a sum of Rs. 19,85,810 towards relief and rehabilitation projects. Apart from this, relief articles worth Rs. 12,29,425 received as gift from philanthropic-minded people were distributed amongst the distressed and needy.

The Ramakrishna Math conducted relief and rehabilitation programmes involving an expenditure of Rs. 35,59,077.

During the year, various rural and tribal welfare schemes involving substantial outlay of funds, were implemented by quite a few branches of the Mission and the Math.

Amidst the important developments during the year, the inauguration of the Institute of Vivekananda Studies at Vidyapith, Madras, and an artificial limbs fitting centre in the hospital at Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh) deserve special mention. The Mission did commendable medical work through its 8 hospitals, 66 dispensaries and 14 mobile units. More than 40 lakh patients were treated amongst whom rural and tribal folk formed a significant percentage.

More than 8 lakhs of people were served by the hospitals and dispensaries conducted by the Ramakrishna Math.

In 1986-87, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Ramakrishna Math lived upto their reputation in the field of education. The academic results were brilliant as usual with their students securing several positions of merit both at the school and at the college levels. There were some spectacular achievements in the field of sports too. The football team of the school at Along finished runners-up in the prestigious 'Subrata Mukherjee Cup' tournament. A girl-student from Sarada Vidyalaya, Madras, was selected to represent the country in the inter-city sports meet held at Tokyo. The educational institutions of the Mission numbering 1,377 had a students' strength of 1,27,138 while 7,863 students were educated in the 32 institutions run by the Ramakrishna Math. Out of these, 1,231 institutions including 764 non-formal education centres, were located in rural and tribal areas.

The Math and Mission centres in other countries were engaged in educational, medical, cultural and spiritual activities of various types.

Excluding the headquarters at Belur, at the end of the year, the Mission and Math had 78 and 71 branches respectively, in India and a few other countries.

'He who knows the Supreme attains the highest.'—Tait. Upa II.1.1

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THE IMITATION OF VYASA

What is there in him—A certain Mumukshu (seeker after salvation) was going to his guru with offerings in his hand, when a self-styled yogi, a pretentious and peevish man, came to him and said, 'Your guru knows nothing, you are a fool and he is a bigger fool; he cannot work any miracles, cannot walk on water, nor fly in the air, nor lie buried in earth, as I can do. He knows nothing, why do you waste your time in going to him. He is an idiot and an impostor.' The wise mumukshu heard these words and calmly replied, 'I go to him because he does not speak ill of others, nor gets angry, which I consider the greatest of miracles. The *soi dissant* yogi felt the force of the reply and went away abashed.

A good story—Moses in his wanderings in the wilderness, came upon a shepherd, who was praying to God in the fervour of his soul and saying, 'O My Master, my Lord, would that I knew where I might find Thee and become Thy servant; would that I might tie Thy shoe latchet and comb Thy hair and wash Thy robes and kiss Thy beautiful feet and sweep Thy chamber, and serve the milk of my goats to Thee for whom my heart crieth ont.' And the anger of Moses was kindled and he said to the shepherd, 'Thou blasphemest. The most High has no body, no need of clothing nor of nourishment nor of a chamber nor of a domestic. Thou art an infidel.' And the heart of the shepherd was darkened, for he could make to himself no image of one without a bodily form and corporeal wants, and he gave himself up to despair and ceased to serve God. Then God spake nnto Moses and said, 'Why hast Thou driven the servant away from me. Every man has received from me his mode of being, his way of speech. Words are nothing to Me, I regard the heart.'

So said the Lord in the Gita 'In whatever form men worship Me, in that same form I appear unto them.'

A text and a commentary—There were five men, students of a certain sage who regarded themselves as very learned. One day they went to a village where they saw a quiet-looking man in rather humble circumstances. In the course of a conversation in which they displayed all their learning, the villager remarked 'One must truly die, and the death of one's self is the real mukti (salvation)'. The learned *Vedantins* did not understand the remark and almost ridiculed the idea. However they stayed with him the whole day and took their night's rest in his house. That same night it so happened, that thieves entered the house and were carrying away the little property that was there. The visitors woke np by the noise and roused their host from what they thought his sleep. The latter rose, and in spite of their tumultuous exhortations to run after the thieves and arrest them remained unconcerned as if it were somebody else's house that was plundered. His conduct appeared to them as even more absurd than his remark during the day, and the next day, when they went to their guru, they reported the whole matter to him, and he said, 'Friends, his conduct in the night is the commentary on the text which he gave out in the day, namely, that the death of the self is the real mukti'. So saying, he took his disciples along with him and paid his respects to the village gentleman whose philosophy was not mere theory bnt practice in daily life.

PRACTICAL HINTS FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

Habits a Seeker Needs

1. Real austerity is based upon these three principles: 1. Take refuge in the truth. Truth is the pillar to which you must always hold, while performing any action; 2. Conquer lust; 3. Renounce all cravings. Observe these three principles. That is real austerity, and the greatest of these is to conquer lust.

—*Swami Brahmananda.*

2. When, fortunately, a little faith and a spirit of renunciation shoot forth in one's mind, one should preserve them and nurture them with special care, by keeping aloof from all worldly men; but when they are once firmly rooted within, then none can shake them at all.

—*Swami Ramakrishnananda*

3. Do not speak of your spiritual moods and experiences to anyone, least of all to those of a worldly nature. It may hinder your growth. However, if you exchange your experiences with one of a like mind whose temperament is in harmony with your own, you may be helped in your progress.

—*Swami Brahmananda*

4. One should not brag about one's spiritual practices. Even if you have attained nirvikalpa samadhi, what of that? You would simply have become what you already are. There is nothing to brag of in that.

—*Swami Shivananda*

5. Q: Mother, what rules and regulations should one observe regarding food?

A: First offer to God whatever you eat. One must not eat unoffered food. As your food is, so will be your blood. From pure food you get pure blood, pure mind and strength. Pure mind begets ecstatic love.

—*Holy Mother*

6. Meditation is not such an easy matter. When you have eaten too much, the mind becomes restless. Also unless you keep lust, anger, greed, and other such passions under control, the mind will remain unsteady. How can you meditate with an unsteady mind?

—*Swami Brahmananda*

7. Both forced silence and wild indulgence in talk are equally harmful.

Gossip, talking ill of others, interference in affairs not concerning oneself, the seeking of acquaintances and wasting one's time idly in the company of others are very dangerous to a spiritual aspirant. All these things distract the mind and drag it to the external world. It is only those who do not take to a spiritual life seriously that indulge themselves in the above manner.

—*Swami Brahmananda*

8. Regularity is very important in spiritual life. Therefore you must try to keep to the same hours as far as possible.... Keep watch over your mind and see that recollectedness continues throughout the day. There is no need to observe the vow of silence. One can practice recollectedness even without it. What you should avoid is gossip and worldly talk.

—*Swami Saradananda*